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TALKS

WITH

TEACHERS.

By A. D. MAYO.

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PREFACE.

I call this book "Talks With Teachers," because I am indebted to the many superior teachers who have honored me by their confidence and affection for almost everything I value in it. What is herein written is an honest attempt to photograph the flying impressions of the visits of many years to many varieties of schools. It may be that some things of daily occurrence in the school-room will impress the teacher with a new meaning, when reflected back from the mind of an observant and sympathetic layman. Perhaps a long service, as a labor of love, in that half-way house of American education, the office of "school committee-man," may excuse an attempt to awake the soul of our young teachers and open their eyes, at once, to the hidden realm of child-land and the great visible world of American out-door life. If I can bring the teacher, the children, the parents, and the people to know each other better and "work together for good," I will not be sorry I have written this book.

A. D. M.

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TALKS WITH TEACHERS.

HAS SHE FAILED?

We strolled into "No. 5" of the Hickory street grammar school-house, on a hot July afternoon. Before the door stood the mistress of ceremonies, occupied in developing American raw material into American citizenship. Judging from a somewhat careful inspection, we should say the material was at the average grade of the average New-England city, every civilized clime and nationality being represented, with a sprinkling of young Chinese "princes" and Japanese "noblemen." But, just then, our little architect of Republican citizenship was at a dead-lock. In front of her wriggled little "Patsy," the evil genius of the school, hung on wires, every joint and muscle, hair and eye-winker, revolving "on its own hook," to the infinite delight of all the fun-loving youngsters in range of his gyrations. Over there, in the northwest corner, sulks "Pompey," a young American citizen of African descent, *via* "old Virginia," as grouty and glum as if he pondered the wrongs of his race for the last two centuries. At the center of operations, with face whittled down to the keenness of a sharp-set razor, bolt upright, with a devil in his eye, towered long-legged "Sam," the promising sprout of the shrewdest horse-jockey in town; apt at his lessons, but a creature too deep in his mischief for

"any fellow to find out," even though the "fellow" were "woman in the school-room." And at the opposite angle, filling her seat with a great spread of frowsy hair, freckles, and unwashed finery, lolled big Laura, sole daughter of a Teutonic sire; while near enough for all purposes of young feminine friskiness, like a lost ray of sunshine trying to escape from a dark room, flashed little Amy, the last new scholar sent in by her Kanuck operative parents, who are terribly annoyed that they cannot "work" her in the mills instead of giving her twenty weeks of school.

What with this "conflict of the ages" and nationalities, this afternoon evolution of the races, our poor schoolmistress stood like the old-style figure of "Patience on a monument, smiling at Grief." Right lovely she certainly was; of good blood and culture; a faithful member of the church; a dutiful daughter; possibly beloved by somebody who was hard at work to relieve her from this purgatory; doing her little best to work out the radical problem of American civilization on a salary of $450 per year, with sweeping fires of criticism from the press, drawing-room, and pulpit thrown in. We sat out the afternoon, saw a good deal that mercifully was witholden from her weary eyes, and, walking home, pondered the question, "Has She Failed?"

Half a dozen great religious journals, within the last few weeks, have very positively asserted that she, and all the like of her, have failed. "The common school has failed!" comes down to us in thunder tones, out of a cloud-land of judgment, from these hallowed precincts. It teaches too much religion, and even dares to use the Bible as a reading-book! shouts No. 1. It ducates Patsy and Pompey and Sam and their "affinities" in school-room deviltry, "out of their sphere,"

groans No. 2. It doesn't send out the average Yankee boy at fourteen (what no boy of any nation ever was) an expert in "industrial training," chimes in No. 3. It casts the spiritual nature into a slough of abominations, responds the good old Pope, from across the water; and Bishop McQuade intones "Amen." And so on. Each differs from the other in the special location of the failure; their testimonies are apt to conflict; but they all come to the same melancholy ending, — "The common school has failed, and must be reconstructed from the bottom according to our new patent."

Yet it is difficult to see why Mr. Bob Ingersoll and the orators of the Lake Pleasant "Reform" Camp-meeting, cannot walk out of the churches of each denomination of Christians represented by those oracular "organs," any Sunday morning, and prefer the same charge. The parsons and the churches stand before the people in America, on precisely the same ground as the teachers and the schools, so far as the results on their hearers and disciples are concerned. Both are the work of the American people, acting in perfect freedom; doing the best known to them as practicable to be done, under the circumstances, to elevate the average American into the ideal man. We suppose they all make a great many mistakes; grope their way through twilight realms of spiritual uncertainty, and are never sure of immediate results. Certainly the church and the religious press, so far, have achieved no such overmastering success here in the United States as justifies them in throwing stones at the windows of the common school-house. With two hundred and fifty years free swing at the people, they have neither been able to prevent the most terrible civil war of modern times, nor curb the insanity for wicked speculation, nor make New

York a paradise, or Washington a forecourt of Heaven; not even been able always to hold their own bishops and deacons and "pillars" back from the most vulgar and violent phases of very commonplace sin. That is just what friend Bob and the Lake Pleasant orators of all sexes are crying out in a shrill twang, like a cracked fife at a country-training.

But when these religious organs reply, "We work in the face of the one radical difficulty in this lower world,— *the free will of wicked and foolish men*";—we accept the defence. We do not excuse the churches and the sacred editors from doing their utmost to persuade men to humble their wicked and foolish wills to accordance with the will of God; but we understand the realm of the laborer on spiritual and mental material is not the realm of mathematical certainties and natural forces. If Smith and Wesson's new machinery is perfectly adjusted, there can be no failure in the revolver that comes forth from their shop. But let the parson be St. Paul himself, or the schoolmistress the flower of the Christian civilization of old Massachusetts, yet, Patsy and Sam and Pompey and the girls aforesaid, have each a power given them to hold all this at bay till the end of time. And just now these religious organs are hotly discussing the question if they have not the power to do this forever, even to baffle God Almighty himself through ages of infinite wickedness.

We know that our dear little schoolmistress in No. 5 has toiled there, through sun and shadow, these ten years; has sent up some five hundred children, of "all sorts and conditions," into the grades above, with rather more than usual success; has kept her temper, so that her smile is like a sunrise; has not lost her power of lying awake half a night and crying over the obduracy

of poor Patsy and Sam and all the rest of them; that now the older ones begin to come back to call upon her, and she sees that a good deal of good seed she thought gobbled up by the foul birds of the school-room has struck a vital spot and borne much fruit. We know she is a whole-souled, well-trained American woman; working under the direction of a dozen of the wisest and best men and women of the city; doing better work every year, and praying without ceasing for grace to do better. So we conclude she has not failed, though she does read a little of the Bible to her uneasy flock every school-morning; does not turn out experts of fourteen years for the counting-rooms, the mills, and the farms; does finally get into the head of Fraulein Freckleface and Mademoiselle Kanuck to make an effort to rise above their "present sphere" of untidy, uncombed, rowdy girlhood; does succeed in spoiling a good horse-jockey in Sam, and sprouting a scientific professor. She succeeds and fails in the same way the American common school succeeds and fails; just as the American church, American good society, American politics, American business,—all things distinctively American, succeed and fail; a good deal of pretty lamentable failure all round, but, on the whole, a people, in 1878, of 40,000,000, a good deal ahead of the crowd of 20,000,000 that wrestled with the giant of republicanism in our boyhood.

RESERVOIRS AND STREAMS.

When a very small boy, we learned that a running stream was not a reliable motive-power for our toy water-wheel; and one of our earliest recollections is our success in damming a little rill near the school-house, and thereby securing a small mill-pond that turned our miniature works all through a dry summer. It seems to us that a good many of our pretentious common-school reformers never learned in their childhood the advantage of a reservoir, either in mechanics or in the State. They perpetually insist on locating their water-wheel in the middle of a running stream; forgetting that the liveliest brook is a variable quantity, and the most exuberant current of youthful energy will run out, if put too early to the work of turning the great mill-wheel of American life.

Indeed, the great defect in American society comes from the necessity of a new country to locate its water-wheels on running streams. It is next to impossible to convince the sharp boys and girls of one of our new States of the necessity of laying up a store of information, of rehearsing the work of life, of training their faculties, and using the experience of the past as a spiritual capital for their own beginning in life. Why should the precocious American boy, who at fifteen is further ahead than a German or English lad at twenty in the ways of "getting on," be compelled to smother his aspirations by four years' general cultivation in the high school, or even a thorough study of the first principles of the trade or profession at which he aims?

Why not "cut in," at once, and learn to farm, trade, preach, teach, "run a machine," or go to congress by doing the thing itself? This is the common American way, still defended by a good many successful men, in all walks of life, as a new discovery of our republican society. If these people would sit down and cast a look along their backward path, count the innumerable wrecks of life, ability, and character in that fearful war and realize that they are the few survivors of the most wasteful method of generating social power, they might revise their hasty and peremptory opinion.

The fact is, the great curse of American life, to-day, is the lack of competent knowledge, trained faculty, and reserved force in our industrial and professional life. The country is swarming with young people as "smart as a steel-trap," up to anything, from a peanut stand to the presidency;—a continent full of wild colts on the "keen jump" for the "good time coming." Our professions sway hither and thither in every gust of popular caprice; our trade vibrates on the edge of a game of chance; our legislatures, even the high and mighty congress at Washington, perpetually try to legislate the impossible; and society, itself, becomes a feverish dream from this impatient and shallow theory of education. Bad enough in the earlier periods of national life, when it was a necessity, it becomes suicidal now that the republic is called to its place among the leading powers of the world. A wild bull careering over a Texas prairie is picturesque, but a wild bull charging down Broadway is a horror. There have been times when there was no great danger in the experimental antics of American youth, for America, itself, was a group of settlements in the wilderness; and if society became too hot for the rabid originality of any man, he could go off

into the woods, stake out a new metropolis, and "grow up with the country." But in such a cluster of Commonwealths as are now packed between Boston Bay and St. Pauls, this style of operating in every region of life is yearly becoming more destructive. The man who fancies these great States are to be handled by a generation of boys that pitch into life at fifteen, and of girls who shoulder the trails of their "pull-backs" at twelve; with the average newspaper, and the competitions of an American life for an university; will wake up some election morning, as the sleepers on the Mill-river bank were aroused, by the noise of a down-rushing destruction. We are now in the agonies of apprehension, fighting in the darkness of a whirlwind that threatens to blow down the best things in America; a tempest raised from the hot whirl of our crude and crazy habit of industrial and professional life.

And now, as if we had not enough of this running the social machinery of a continent with a variable mountain-torrent as a motive-power, certain of our brilliant preachers, journalists, and labor-reformers, are raising the cry that even the little head of water we raise by the five years' general training in the common school shall be let off, and infants, from six to twelve, be launched at once upon "industrial training." This is simply a bid for general industrial bewilderment; an aggravation of all our present social and civil disorders. It would take away, especially, from the children of operatives, small mechanics, and day-laborers, their only hope of laying up a capital of information and general mental discipline, invaluable, just now, to every American child. It would let loose upon States like Massachusetts and Ohio, a vast multitude of youth, with no habits of mental discipline, no stock of general informa-

tion, no reserve of moral or spiritual force,—taught only to do one thing, and, like the European workman, fatally dependent on that one chance for daily bread. The whole scheme is a hair-brained, wholesale project for re-producing in America the classes that are already becoming the terror of all the European empires, with the added danger that every one of these graduates, in America, is a voter, and a very possible candidate for any position in civil or professional life.

No thoughtful school-man, or real statesman doubts that the common school that educates the mass of American children, below the age of twelve years, is capable of great improvement in many ways. It is certain that the great need of our industrial classes is a system of industrial education, at least as thorough as that now furnished to the professional classes. But it is just as evident that the reforms in the common school should all aim at the more thorough training of all the powers, the more effectual opening of all highways to knowledge, and the generating of that roundabout habit of the whole manhood and womanhood, which qualifies the citizen to deal with life, as it now is in the reconstructed republic. To pull down this dam, drain off this reservoir of national power, and trust to an education of the masses which makes the getting a living a child's problem from the cradle, is like building a factory on an island in the Connecticut, to run as the river may choose to help it on, with no barrier between it and the White Mountains in the weeks of the spring freshet. It is also the deliberate conviction of the wisest masters of technical instruction that their pupils succeed in proportion to the amount of general information, discipline, and mature capacity they bring to their studies. Indeed, the warning of our whole past, the

solemn counseling of the present, and the outlook of our future, are all in the direection of a general education in home, school, and church, which shall bring out a generation in which is garnered up a reserve of knowledge, power, and character far beyond that of any previous era in our affairs. Build the dam stronger than ever; store away among the secret hollows of all the upper regions of the national life, mighty lakes in quiet reservoirs; place at the gateways better men, more thoroughly trained to let on the water; and a new hope will dispel our anxious foreboding for the years to come.

THE CROSS IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM.

We were talking with a group of young ladies, the other day, about a new teacher, just brought to their school from a neighboring State. They had fallen in love with her, at first, evidently in a very genuine way. Especially they were charmed by a wonderful interest she manifested in them,—the bringing her womanhood into line with their girlhood,—the indefinable something which publishes as clearly as if it had been written on the school-house door, that the mistress is not only concerned that the pupil shall learn her lesson, but shall assimilate knowledge, develop power, and be more a woman for the life in school.

The following day we happened to get on the track of the private history of this new schoolmistress. Six months ago she was in a position where a proposition to take a school at $600 a year would not have been looked at. Another sort of life, dear to the heart and enticing to the imagination of the average young lady, was almost in her hands. But one morning, in August, she woke up to find her castle in the air changed to a fog-bank, rapidly dissolving under the hot sun of tragic reality, and herself utterly dependent on her daily labor for her daily bread. Then this providential call appeared, and she is, to-day, the spiritual mother of a group of girls who look up to and love her for what she is to them, all unconscious of the motive power behind the soul-screen of her lofty reserve.

That is the secret of her success; and that is the secret motive power in thousands of school-rooms, all

over the land. Times of revolution are always times of affliction, anxiety, and peril for the best young women of a nation. There are multitudes of the noblest and loveliest girls in America, to-day, who bear a cross so black and heavy that, when it was first cast on their tender shoulders they fell to the earth in despair. Only after a discipline best known to such as they, have they staggered up to their feet, and found out the least painful way of carrying their burden, and going on in the lot appointed. They do not all bear the cross sweetly. Too many conquer, as far as the heroism goes, but come out sharp, fretful, morbid, bearing their black burden with a sort of defiance that challenges admiration; or shrinking off into the by-ways of a reserve that shuts them up in a "woman's prison" for life. It is hard to say to a noble young woman, whose spiritual atmosphere is all the time exasperating, depressing, or strangely confusing her classes, that she is becoming unfit to be the guide of childhood; that even her heroism is worn so like a shining coat of brazen mail, that it dazzles the eyes of the little ones. But it must often be said. And were the secrets of all hearts in the school-house laid bare, it would be seen that one of the most frequent causes of failure, especially in our young women teachers, is the failure to bear the cross aright in the sight of the children.

But, now and then, one is enabled, like our new schoolmistress, to transform her cross from a black horror, appalling and hateful to the eyes of the little ones, to a flower-wreathed branch of the tree of life. Then, when her sharp sorrow, or grinding anxiety, only makes her more gentle and forbearing and sympathetic,—more tender in shielding them from the rasping of premature trial, and more faithful in doing her work for mind,

heart, and soul,—she brings into the presence of her little kingdom a queenly power, by which all hearts are won, and lives are moulded as willing clay in the hands of the artist. No one among her little loves may divine the reason for the worship that goes out to her as naturally as a child's rejoicing at the first glimpse of a sunny morning; but all the same the cross of amaranths transforms the school-room with a light and fragrance like that wafted from the gardens of the better land.

We never heard of anybody who seriously objected to this style of teaching "religion and good morals" in the common school. Nobody's "right of conscience" is involved when such a woman rules from the desk, although every child on the benches is brought by a sweet and mighty compulsion to a willing submission. And without this central motive power of a consecrated womanhood in the teacher, every attempt at moulding character is a foreordained failure. But with a woman on the teacher's throne who has learned to take her cross into the school-room and bear it so that her scholars are won to an adoring love for all the Christian graces incarnate in herself, a world full of difficulties and entanglements disappears under the enchantment of the one power that guides the world,—the might of a manhood or womanhood fashioned in the image of the Prince of Men.

Some College Presidents and Co-education.

The new Smith College for women, at Northampton, Mass., is rising into deserved estimation. Beginning with an entering class of fifteen, it has now seventy-two freshmen, and boasts of a curriculum that rivals Amherst College, upon the opposite side of the valley. Its buildings and social arrangements are excellent, and no lovelier place for a college-life can be found than old Northampton. With all proper discount for the enthusiasm of its special friends, it must be said that no American college for girls has a better promise of eminence in a not far distant future.

A good many friends of Smith College are thinking, just now, that this admirable institution is strong enough in its own merits to get bravely on without the peculiar style of advertising that appears in the published report of a lecture, several times delivered by its president, Dr. Seelye. In this address the learned Doctor not only arrays himself among the foes of coëducation, but presses the point in a way that calls for a little friendly dissent. We look to the president of a woman's college for a style of argumentation upon these delicate questions of education, that will bear the inspection of the finest intelligence. But we confess to a sudden shock of disappointment to find the good Doctor repeating over the regulation assertions about the danger of associating boys and girls in study, with a few absurd stories and jokes from Western journals, at the expense of coëducational colleges, flung in as a basket of bouquets at a rather dull entertainment.

For example, how can the president be sure that even all his own patrons absolutely prefer a college for "girls only," in view of the notorious fact that all the old, established universities, east of the Hudson, obstinately shut their doors against women? The only colleges, of national fame in New England, that admit women with men, are those at Boston and Middletown. The Boston University numbers among its students some of the finest girls from the most "select" circles of that conservative old city, and gathers to its recitation-rooms young ladies from all the region round about. We are glad that so many young women are taking the full college course at Vassar, Smith, and Wellesley; but if Harvard, Yale, Brown, Tufts, Dartmouth, and all the time-honored colleges for men, were also flung open, with suitable living arrangements, for the reception of girls, we should know a great deal better than even President Seelye now can, the actual feeling of the best people and the superior students on this vexed question.

Again: if, as the Doctor asserts, there are not as many lady-students in all the coëducational colleges in the United States as the one hundred and fifty now in Smith, it is certainly unreasonable to expect that these one hundred and fifty girls, sown over half a continent, will civilize the score of colleges to which they are admitted. He charges that the presence of girls does not civilize; that coëducational colleges still haze. We are not aware that the presence of two or three young women in any crowd of two or three hundred young men, would change their vulgar habits at once. Indeed, while some husbands still swear at and even beat their wives, and now and then an infuriate woman demolishes her unaccommodating partner, it must be evident that the association of the sexes is not a panacea

for all evils. All that a sensible defender of coëducation pretends is, that in school, as everywhere else in life, man and woman, properly associated, are in a safer and more natural state than when separated. We hold that a fair review of the experiment of coëducation in the United States has demonstrated that fact. There are no schools in America so free from the vices and vulgarities that still disgrace our great colleges, as the academical, normal, and high schools and colleges where men and women are trained and taught together.

It hardly seems to us that the girl-graduates of Smith will quite relish the retailing about the country, by their president, of stale newspaper yarns about eccentric and mischievous students in the coëducational colleges of the West. The West is a far-off land to some of our Eastern college presidents, and it seems to be considered safe to attribute a good deal to Western colleges of which their officers and students are ignorant. We suspect that if the memories of the educated mothers of the valley of the Connecticut were ransacked, there might be revived several volumes of laughable stories about the pranks of boarding-school girls at Mrs. Willard's and other famous seminaries, that would match the president's little list of jokes. Only last summer, we listened for an hour to a description of life at a celebrated select academy for "girls of the best families," in old Connecticut half a century ago, which rivaled the most grotesque and pronounced demonstration of even the bloomer student in the "new university" out West. It is a melancholy fact that no school, high or low, from old Oxford to new Smith, ever yet invented a strainer sufficiently fine to strain out all its own black sheep; and the years that come within the scope of the "higher education" are proverbially the season for

"sowing wild oats." It will hardly do for either the exclusive friends of male colleges or female seminaries to challenge comparison in this direction,—certainly not till the rowdyism of old Princeton, and the facts about the average girls' school, are explained away.

There seems to us a singular lack of delicacy in such wholesale assaults upon coëducation, as some of our New-England college presidents have fathered within the past year. When we look over the whole country, and its past twenty years of educational life, and see what a crowd of our noblest and most successful girls have obtained their entire education in schools of this sort, the levity with which these eminent gentlemen dispose of the girl-graduates is somewhat suggestive of limited information. All the regulation arguments against coëducation apply with special force to our system of free high and State normal schools, and country academies; for certainly the girl-pupils in these schools are less mature and more open to its peculiar dangers than older students in colleges. Is it quite safe to fling about these wholesale disparagements, to say nothing of tossing withered bouquets of newspaper squibs at this great throng of young women, now filling all the positions of life from professor in Wellesley and Vassar to wife and mother in the humblest home? Will even President Seelye venture the assertion that, as a class, the body of American young women-graduates of our high, normal, and academical schools; of Oberlin, Antioch, the Boston University, Cornell, and other well-known collegiate schools; are inferior in any womanly way to the graduates of seminaries and colleges for girls only? If any man does venture that assertion, he will be enlightened by a call to the front of the women who have presumed to walk with their brothers and boy-friends through

the gate of culture into the temple of American life.

The whole question of the higher education of woman is, just now, in a most interesting condition for experiment and observation. It is hardly safe to dogmatize on either side beyond the range of achieved results. No wise friend of coëducation denies that for large classes of girls a separate, often a very exclusive, education is best, as the sensible public schoolman is the best friend of good private schools. But when the friends and teachers of this class of girls assume that it represents the sole type of legitimate Christian womanhood, and insinuate the odium of Bohemianism or vulgarity on the other, probably larger, class, to whom coëducation is an especial help, we should cry,—halt! We are sorry that our New-England college presidents have, so far, failed to treat this question with that breadth of view and fullness of information such a theme, treated by such men, demands. It will not settle anything in American life to dogmatize from the chair of the proudest old Eastern university, or the newest prosperous college for woman. Let us try to cultivate a catholic spirit, and keep our eyes open to what our daughters are really doing in this new world, and all will come out to the glory of true womanhood and the vindication of the truth.

THE CLERGY AND THE COMMON SCHOOLS.

With due respect to the body of eminent divines of New Haven, who have undertaken to decide the vexed question of "the Bible in the schools" by the magic of "30 per cent.," we fear that their elaborate scheme of children's worship is a failure. Instead of a practical arrangement for the instruction of New Haven children in the great cardinal principles of Christian morality, in which all good men agree, and the unsectarian use of the Bible as the acknowledged handbook of morality; with such brief, reverent, daily acknowledgement of dependence on God as none but a proselyting atheist could object to; these learned doctors have presented us with the plan of a new "Union Church," in which the lion of the old Connecticut puritanism and the lamb of our new American catholicism may "lie down together" and be at rest. As an ingenious plan for constructing a new Union Children's Church on the scale of 30 per cent. (why not 7 per cent., 7 being the biblical as well as the bank number), it is a new clerical curiosity. As a serious arrangement for the settlement of the question of "religion in the common schools," it will fall dead, another victim to the obstinate disease of clericalism, which dies so hard, even under the shadow of old Yale and new Sheffield.

The radical trouble with this absurd "compromise" is the underlying assumption that, in public affairs, the clergy of our various American churches are the representatives of the people. Even in the new congregationalism of Connecticut, the clergy do not assume to be, in any ecclesiastical sense, the representative of the

churches. But Father Fitzpatrick has set a clever trap in the assumption that the whole body of clergy, in matters of State, sustain the same relation to the whole people that he assumes as representative of the infallible papal power; and Dr. Bacon and his associates seem to have fallen into it. In the United States of America, even in the State of Connecticut, a clergyman is only a citizen, entitled to the weight and following belonging to his wisdom and virtue as a man. The church in Connecticut, as an ecclesiastical establishment, has absolutely nothing to do with the common schools; and no clergyman as clergyman or priest, has rights inside a school-house other than P. T. Barnum as representative of his "great moral show."

The State of Connecticut is compelled to teach and train all the school-children in the great principles of morality, which underlie Republican institutions; which are the corner-stone alike of that glorious old Commonwealth, and of her system of common education. A vast majority of the people believe the Bible, discreetly and like any other text-book, like the dictionary, like the school treatises on the "new science," is the great handbook of this morality, and resent the stigma cast upon it by the secularists in its banishment from the teacher's desk. The method of using it, as the whole policy of the "morning exercise," is a matter to be determined by public expediency. It can be used, and is used in thousands of the best schools of the country, in a way to offend and oppress nobody but a little clique of obstinate sectarians, clerical and lay churchmen, and equally obstinate secularists. The agitation against such use has not come out of the brain or the heart of the people, but from the theological and anti-ecclesiastical "conscience" of these two classes. It is the common fallacy

of both these disputants to represent the question as a dispute between the members of different churches, to be arranged by a compromise engineered by "representative" advocates of different schools. But the matter is simply a question of the best method of training the children in the common morality of a civilized State inhabited by Christian people. The whole discipline, organization, method of instruction in the public schools, assumes the Christian moralities as an essential element in the free education of the people; and the exercises of devotion and formal drill in these moralities are little beyond an outward representation of this moral discipline which is the heart of the school.

When any body of the clergy, however learned and beloved by the people, assume or accept the work of parceling out the children in a Union-school Church, arranged on a scale of "30 per cent.," they fail to perceive the fundamental relations of religion to the State. But the trouble of New Haven is not of to-day. When that city permitted a Catholic priest to dictate the organization and officering of one of its public schools, it fell into the trap the bishops of that church are all the time setting for our communities. *The assumption that the children of Catholic parents are the constituency of a priest, who, as their representative, makes a treaty with the Government, and settles all differences, as the ambassador of a foreign power, will never be tolerated by the American people.* It is the root of a treason and a rebellion a thousand times more dangerous than the slave-holders' revolt, inasmuch as it would change our form of government from a State ruled by the whole people, to a State kept afloat by a series of compromises between the representatives of a contentious crowd of religious and anti-religious organizations.

We regard the New Haven clerical settlement of the

"religious difficulty" in the schools as the plan of the extreme secularists, a vital misconception of the question. The question is not how to make a school in which every religious and anti-religious sect shall be fitly represented; or how to carry on a school in a way that shall offend the "conscience" of no man, woman, or child in the community. It is simply a question of the best way of instructing and training children in the fundamental moralities which lie at the basis of a free State inhabited by Christian people, and, therefore, founded on the Christian system of morals. What text-books, what methods of instruction, what form of discipline are best adapted to accomplish this work? To shirk the obligation to teach and train the school-children in Christian morals, is to let the bottom fall out of the public school. The best method of doing this is a fair subject of discussion. The remark of one of the members of the New Haven School Committee, that "half a dozen common-sense laymen would have settled the matter without trouble," savors strongly of common-sense. At any rate this compromise of the clergy is about the worst way of settlement that can be devised, and does not recommend the system of political philosophy current in the upper clerical circles of that renowned city.

While we write, the news comes that the School Committee of New Haven have very properly tossed this elaborate clerical plan of school-worship into the waste-basket, and by an overwhelming majority restored the simple unsectarian use of the Bible common in American schools. It is a refreshing evidence of the intention of the average citizen to repudiate alike the extreme clerical and secular view of the State, and to go on instructing the school-children in practical morality, backed by the Bible and American common-sense.

THANKSGIVING FOR HARD TIMES.

One of the most valuable lessons of the past bitter experience of hard times to the whole American people, has been *the absolute necessity of knowledge and trained ability to ensure permanent success in private or public affairs.* In a nation like India, where a dozen experts in council manage for 250,000,000 of people, popular ignorance, for a time, may be excused, although at the penalty of future revolution. But in a republic like the United States of America, popular ignorance is simply national suicide. What does the ugly fact that 90 per cent. of all Americans entering business fail declare, except that 90 per cent. of Americans are ignorant and untrained in their occupation? The conceited ignorance of thousands of young men who have madly rushed upon the most complicated operations of business, explains their mournful collapse. The deplorable confusion of ideas and ignorance of great masses of our newly naturalized population explains the existence of the spectre of communism which has even startled old Boston out of her sobriety. The verdant notion that a native American can do anything by virtue of native smartness and indomitable energy, has brought success to a few who have learned the laws of work as they have gone on, but has strewn the land with wrecks of dishonesty and folly. The crazy ignorance of vast masses of people in all our States is the great dismal swamp out of which rise the cloudy theories of finance, government, and society, which keep us in constant alarm.

The hard times have opened our eyes to the fact that the American young man of to-day no longer lives in

the provincial world of the fathers; that the Republic has cast off its round-a-bout and put on the apparel of a first-class nation; that business and public and social economy are sciences and only intelligent and skilled labor can look for a reward. The smart boy who now tries to "cut in" ahead of his companions by dashing into business before his mental beard is grown, will be picked up by an ambulance a little farther on. The brawling agitator who is shot into the Legislature on a "people's ticket," will turn up the ignorant member of the House who will be laughed back to his clumsy work. Every class of people who despise knowledge and trained skill in any profession, must now take "back seats." We may storm and rave against this law as we will, but God's way is always the best way. It is best the work of this world should be done by men and women who bring mind, information and superior manhood and womanhood, to every task.

The people are beginning to see this. There never was a time when questions about the education and training of American children were so eagerly debated as now. During the past four years of financial disaster, the stream of private benefaction in the endowment of colleges and superior schools has flowed steadily on. Our public schools are crowded, and doing such work as was never before known. The wise and devoted teacher, in all kinds of schools, is coming to the front. And in all professions, skilled labor and intelligent workmen are the demand of the day. It will be harder times than ever during the next generation for ignorance, conceit, and crudeness, everywhere. But what a blessing to the country to have its work of all sorts done according to the divine law, enacted before the foundation of the world! So let us stop grumbling at the shady side of Providence, and thank God for hard times.

THE NEGLECTED CLASSES.

The other day we counted one hundred children, of school age, playing in the street during school-hours, in a walk through half-a-dozen squares of the city of New York. One teacher told us she had refused seats to fifty children within the past two weeks. Here is, certainly, a neglected class. The public schools of the metropolis are shamefully crowded, and yet thousands of children are refused instruction, and are coming up to swell the ranks of the ballot-box stuffers, burglars, body-snatchers, and ring-aldermen of that sorely afflicted city.

Here is a well-defined class that can be reached by legislation, backed by a vigorous public opinion. But there is another neglected class, in the other end of the metropolitan social scale, whose case seems to us even more hopeless than the waifs of the street.

A committee of ladies from Fifth Avenue homes visited one of the best primary schools of the city, a few months ago, to obtain ideas about the instruction of a class of orphan children under their patronage As they left, one of them remarked to the lady principal, "Talk of the neglected class,—our own children, who are out of these admirable schools, wasting their time under useless private instruction, are the children to be pitied."

It does not need an extensive acquaintance with the inside of the homes of one class of wealthy people in American cities, to verify the bitter words of this sharp-sighted mother. If there are any children who need

the prayers of the church and the sympathy of every good citizen, it is this increasing crowd of little ones who are the victims of the fashionable rage of this class of newly-made rich, and their snobbish imitators. Almost before they are out of the cradle they are cast into the hands of foreign nurses, to be taught a foreign language. Thus are they robbed of the most delightful association of home-words with the earliest recollections of childhood. Then comes the fashionable child's-school,—a caricature on good instruction,—where all the petty conceits of infancy are nursed to mischievous habits, and the whims of the weak and ambitious mother are the unwritten law of the school-room. Or, if, by chance, the little ones fall into the hands of an able and conscientious teacher, they are victimized, out of school, by the persecutions of the music-teacher and the dancing-master, who consume their time and exhaust their remaining vitality. And all this goes on in the unnatural atmosphere of a sham gentility which drives without halt or remorse to social success; sacrificing to that end, with the fanaticism of a pagan priest brandishing his knife above the victim upon the altar.

No woman of average common-sense undertakes to defend this preposterous abuse of her children, in which sham instruction in school combines with a thoroughly unwholesome training at home to reduce their native vigor of body and soul to the lowest terms. Yet thousands of foolish people, even in the cities of New England, and whole classes of "first people" in other parts of the Union, are offering up their little ones to this moloch of fashion; driving them, like a relentless fate, into chronic invalidism of body and spirit; an early death; or that wretched life-in-death that the existence of multitudes of young people has

become in the most highly-favored circles of America. Just now these mothers are the victims of the considerable class of adventurers who ride the kindergarten hobby, and, with perfect ignorance of the spirit of Froebel, plunder a circle of rich patrons as the price of demoralizing their four-year-old infants.

It is not easy to estimate the mischief that comes to the country from this neglected "upper class." Every pastor of a church, or worker in any vital corner of American life, is perpetually coming across this deadwood in the shape of an exclusive and absurd class of young men and women, who, with a world of opportunity at hand, are open to no appeal save the stimulus of selfishness and social success. It is no small calamity that so many of the sons and daughters of men who have earned a fortune by solid service in the great industrial interests of the Republic, should lapse away into this limbo of affectations. The country needs the highest type of manhood and womanhood, especially in those who set the fashions of society, and, at least for a time, are called to the front in all good enterprises. Of course, this class will fall out in the race of life and its place be taken by young people who can do the work of the hour. But why should our new country be called to such a sacrifice, and why should wealth, honorably acquired by a life of toil and thought, so often entail the curse of imbecility upon our children?

The remedy is in the hands of the mothers in these beautiful homes. There are women enough in every circle of fashion who know the folly and sin of this abuse of childhood. It does not require a great many martyrs in any American city to upset a ridiculous fashion, especially where the soul and body of a beloved child is at stake. A resolute strike for the children by

a few Christian women of wealth, would arrest attention. A declaration of independence against the French nurse, the music and the dancing-master, the milliner and Mrs. Grundy, would meet a hearty response in thousands of homes now growing resttive under the despotism of the little tyrants. A thorough ventilation of our whole system of private schools in cities, and a peremptory demand that their teachers shall be up with the best methods of instruction and discipline in the best public schools, would lift this whole dim and confused realm into light and efficiency.

Already we see a new class of private schools for girls and boys that forecast the future and strike for the patronage of the more sensible people who profess to educate their children in this way. It is a hopeful symptom, to be encouraged. By determined effort, fasting and prayer, it is possible that this demon of fashioneble imbecility in education may be cast out and the most desperately-neglected class of children in America be restored to the common rights of childhood; the right to eat wholesome food, breathe pure air, dress in plain clothing, use the feet and hands and eyes outdoors; to study by good methods, play at reasonable hours, go to bed in season; in short, the right to do and enjoy what the average American child who is educated in a good public school and brought up outside this charmed circle of youthful imbecility, now does and enjoys.

TEACHERS TO THE FRONT.

There is a story of the campaign in Egypt, that at the beginning of an engagement, Napoleon gave the order, "*Savans and donkeys to the rear!*" It is evident that an engagement is impending, in which more than one feature of our public-school system is threatened. The new governor of Maine sounds the war-whoop against the free high school. The new mayor of Boston demands the sacrifice of the normal school on the altar of economy. In fifty large towns of Massachusetts, to say nothing of New England in general, the village reformer is fitting the crank to the screw that shall press out a little more of the life-blood from the schools, and bring their teachers a little nearer the financial status of the country "hired man" and the city servant-girl. The first governor's message read in the new $12,000,000 State House at Albany, renews the plaintive groan of rural Governor Robinson against the high schools as public "robbery," and flings a parting stone at the normal schools. Possibly the member whose father "didn't like Horace Mann" will appear in the Boston State House this winter, and call for an "investigation" of the educational system of the State. We shall be surprised if the present season does not reveal more than one brilliant plan for economizing Massachusetts into a back seat among the free-school States.

Meanwhile, what do our teachers propose to contribute as their contingent in the defence of children's rights? Do they propose to conform to the Napoleonic

order of battle, and huddle in the rear, with the donkeys and the baggage, and let Providence take care of the front? So, evidently, do not the schoolmen of Ohio. They "took time by the forelock" last July. While we in New England were picnicing at the White Hills, they were planning a campaign at Put-in-Bay in favor of the general reform and elevation of the country district-school. During the autumn and early winter they have been holding a series of rousing conventions in the congressional districts. On the 10th of January they assembled at Columbus to inform the legislature of the educational needs of the State. Governor Bishop makes haste to steal their thunder by a hearty endorsement of their programme in his opening message. On the whole, we like this "Ohio idea." It scores one more mark for this magnificent State in its movement to the front of American affairs.

We wish the teachers of New England, who, like the rest of us, are too much inclined to listen to the reports of Western school-keeping as a placid patriarch at the breakfast-table glances over his gold spectacles at the ringing speech of Benjamin Franklin, Jr., home for college holidays, could be persuaded to take off their spectacles, go to the front door and actually see for themselves what this miscellaneous educational row in the street is about. But we confess to a little sinking of the heart when we contemplate the placid attitude of a good many of the fraternity who seem to imagine the day of battle a fit holiday for them to sort their specimens and write up their journals at the rear. A year ago a handful of the teachers of Maine held pleasant council and amicable discussion at Lewiston, the residence of the new governor. We fancy, if he heard of their presence, he was not impressed with the convic-

tion that they proposed to fight very lustily for any feature of the educational system of the State. Our late State Teachers' Association at Worcester was a delightful little reunion of two or three hundred superior teachers, superintendents, and book-agents. Its discussions would make a useful book for leisurely reading at next summer's vacation. The new spelling, Sauveur's system of teaching foreign languages, military drill, the perils of declamation in high schools, the Alps illustrated, and Prest. Chadbourne's venerable lecture, are all topics of legitimate interest. But we failed to notice the slightest recognition of the fact that the situation was not altogether lovely. If this is all the eight thousand public-school teachers of Massachusetts have to say for themselves, one hardly wonders at the bated breath of Governor Talbot in his brief enigmatical deliverance on the crowning interest of the State; at the sapient suggestions of the mayor of Worcester, or the fact that the second city in the Commonwealth could not afford to bid against Williston Seminary for the admirable principal of her free high school.

Probably the New-England States never contained so large a number of superior teachers in public schools, so thoroughly devoted to the children, as to-day. As we meet them at institutes and conventions, they seem to us full of a good spirit, eager to learn the best methods, ready, if need be, to suffer in purse and comfort for their schools. But we do wish we could see a little more of that fire in their eyes which suggests the leading of the attacking column at the front, rather than a prayer-meeting for the success of the battle at the rear. We believe in martyrdom, *in its place;* but it strikes us forcibly that it is well enough to decide, in advance, *which man is to be burned.* We confess to that wicked-

ness which would see Alderman Dickinson rather than Principal Fairbanks in that position, in the public square of Worcester. We believe the aversion to legitimate public work for the schools, outside the schoolroom; the absorption by numbers of our ablest teachers, out of school hours, in purely scholastic or literary occupation; the neglect by the majority of our "lady teachers" of any attempt at regular visitation in the homes of their children; the apparent indifference of the majority of the eminent Boston schoolmasters to anything outside their special "group" of schools; the petty and teasing opposition of a considerable class of masters to the introduction of improved methods and the normal schools,—accounts for a great deal of the stupid and ugly hostility to the best features of our school system. Five years of such work as the five thousand superior teachers of Massachusetts owe, not only to their immediate constituency, but to the State, through public address, the use of the press, the enlightening of influential citizens, the illustration and explanation of new methods to the people of every district, would lift Massachusetts above all danger of that mischievous thinking by hard-headed legislators and stolid school committee-men, which is the bane of schoolwork in all the American States.

THE TEACHER AND THE PUBLIC.

In one sense the teacher of to-day has dropped out of large public relations, in a way that makes an unfavorable contrast with the schoolmaster of a generation ago. In the dear old days to which Dr. Peabody so fondly refers, in his criticism of present school methods, the old-fashioned, professional schoolmaster, next to the parson, was the public oracle in matters a good deal outside the routine of the school-room. Even in the smaller country towns, the group of college students and superior young men, who "kept school" in the various districts at $12 per month, with perquisites of "boarding round" and weekly "kissing parties," for the time being led the intellectual life of the town,—through the country lyceum furnishing a weekly entertainment of no mean order. The schoolmistress was often the finest young woman of the region, and lived a good deal in the families of her children. Altogether, the teacher in New England, a generation ago, though inferior in scholastic and professional ability to his successor, was a far more prominent character before the people than to-day.

There is no doubt that this changed relation to the public is a positive loss of power in educational affairs. While the schools of New England, with the exception of a class of small country towns, have prodigiously improved, and the teachers, as professional workers, greatly surpass the masters of the old time; it is evident that, as a class, they have steadily lost influence, even in school affairs, with the people. It is amazing to see

the ignorance of educational matters in which multitudes of professional and superior business men are living. To one really acquainted with the present condition of public-school affairs, the majority of criticisms upon them from the daily press, especially from the pulpit and sectarian journals, and not infrequently from college professors and eminent men of letters, have the same air of grotesque unreality that sets every bright American school-girl laughing over the estimate of American affairs by the average British author, bishop, or M. P. The great mass of these criticisms cannot receive a peremptory answer, owing to the curious ignorance of the critic. When Mayor Pratt of Worcester declares the graded system of schools a failure, and President Eliot demands a backdown upon the ancient academical system, and Dr. Peabody tells us that the families of New England have greatly lost interest in the schools their children attend, and *The Churchman* gravely asserts that the blackguards that upset the railroads a year ago were "graduates of the common schools,"—what can be said in reply? The only reply that touches the point is,—These eminent people do not know the common school of to-day. The off-hand opinions of the Boston Board of Trade, of any New-England Legislature, of the leading women of society in any American city, on the public-school system, would betray the same picturesque bewilderment. Even the clergy of New Haven, with Dr. Bacon and Father Fitzpatrick at their head, seriously brought forth their little clerical plan for solving the religious difficulty on the basis of "thirty per cent," which has awakened a hardly-suppressed titter from Boston to Oregon.

Now this is the real danger of the new American system of public schools. It has come up mainly during

the last twenty years, through the zealous activity of leading teachers and schoolmen, and has been anchored in our legislation largely by the prodigious efforts of our foremost State and local superintendents of schools The teachers have, on the whole, done more to improve their own profession and lift up the people's school, than any other class. As a "reward of merit," our municipal reformers have selected them as the earliest victims upon the altar of economy. And now that the Union is reconstructed, gold at par, and the great strain of the last twenty years somewhat lightened, the people are, for the first time, seriously looking at this great structure of popular education, and asking what it all means. And many influential people, forgetting that everything else, including the Republic itself, has undergone the same transformation within the last generation, are behaving as if the school interest alone was bound to go ambling about in the cocked hat, knee-buckles, and gold-headed cane of the fathers, "with all that implies" for the mass of the people.

Now, one thing is evident. If our present school system is to be essentially preserved, it must be through the education of the more intelligent and patriotic people of the country into the thorough appreciation of the educational needs and situation of the day. It doesn't pay to waste argument on crotchety professors, impracticable authors, omniscient scientists, and high-toned leaders of the fashion. But the upper half of the American people are open to information, are easily approachable, and becoming thoroughly interested in this matter. And now the teachers must come to the front; tell the people plainly what they are trying to do for their children; give the reasons for the new organization, methods of instruction and discipline; vindicate

the right of the high school and the normal school to support; and show just where the new technical education can make a safe connection with the public schools.

No body of women in America has now such an opportunity to do any good thing in public, as the women-teachers to educate and lead the people in this new campaign for the children. If they will only realize the fact, come out from the seclusion of their present life, and reasonably improve the off-hours with the parents and the people in general, they can wake up the country in an educational revival. The American schoolmistress in city and country has two whole days of every school week, ten waking hours of every day, and a vacation period from one to two months in duration, outside the school-room. Longfellow and Taylor and Bryant have made a national reputation for literature in a smaller number of leisure hours. If these young ladies say they have no time to visit parents, explain school work, and, with all their wealth of feminine attraction, win over the masculine ignorance, narrowness, and incorrigibility of their districts; if they say they cannot form into associations for outside missionary work that will tell even in the most exclusive circles, they say what the more thoughtful people do not believe. With all fair allowance for the lack of professional training among these women-teachers, they do know a great deal more than nine-tenths of the better-informed people in their localities concerning these things. The people have given them such a position as no class of women occupy in this Republic; and if they accept the position, they must face the obligation.

We believe the failure to do this is chiefly owing to a misapprehension. These young women, as a body, will try to do what the people expect. The upper half of

the American people now do call them forth to instruct their constituents in the new education, and create that wholesome public opinion which can alone sustain it. And our women-teachers will find in this missionary field a most unexpected refreshment and relief from the fatigues of the school-room. In doing this work, faithfully, they will gain social consideration, greatly enlarge their knowledge of society, and reinforce the executive side of their womanhood.

THE SCHOOLMASTER AND THE PEOPLE.

The public schoolmaster is not only a teacher of children inside a school-house, but a public man, as truly as a policeman or a president. In the older portions of the country, especially in New England, his prospect is better for a long term of service than any public servant dependent on the election of the people. Indeed, a superior master may reckon on a life-lease of occupation, plus the gratitude of a gathering crowd of youth and the respect of the better class of the community. No body of official men, save the judges, is now so well paid in New England as the better sort of masters. To no class is the public gaze so naturally directed for leadership in educational affairs as to them.

How shall the masters in our public schools, including superintendents and teachers in special departments, meet the demand for leadership in the defence and reformation of our system of public education?

First, every man now occupied in the work of public instruction should put himself in hearty sympathy with the New Education. Not that he is bound to snap up every novelty in methods, or throw aside the valuable results of his own experience at the dictation of anybody. The task of awakening the "heart and soul and mind and strength" of a child to the pursuit of knowledge, in the large way that builds up a trained manhood and womanhood, is the most difficult on earth; so difficult, indeed, that we should not too severely censure the man who, having learned one way of doing anything good therein, is over-cautious about unrigging his

ship and trusting to Providence for another. But because the work to be done is so great, the opportunity for influence so vital, we rightly demand that he who stands before the public as a master shall keep an open mind and heart, and never close the books against the results of experience in his profession. If anything is generally accepted in the higher walks of school-life, it is that what we call the "natural methods of education" are to be preferred to the mechanical habit of learning books by rote, and cramming the mind with facts which so long has been the "old man of the sea" astride the shoulders of the boys and girls. The methods of instruction taught in our best normal schools, and approved by the vast majority of successful teachers, have the field, and are moving in the right direction.

The time has, therefore, come when a well-known class of masters should suspend their opposition to this movement, and fling open doors and windows to welcome the spirit that shall revive the school. It is a melancholy fact that all the cities and large villages, even of New England, are still worried by such a class of obstructionists. They keep alive in the parents an ignorant prejudice against the best methods of instruction. They baffle the efforts of the best people for effective supervision. They are at the bottom of a good deal of the hostility to the normal schools. They harass the young graduates from these schools by forcing upon them their own antiquated and barbarous style of stuffing the youthful mind with knowledge. Their intolerant and quarrelsome spirit makes them the plague of every school convention. They manufacture ammunition for the lofty creatures who overlook the education of the universe from the frost-bitten summits of high

journalism, and reassure the tax-payer who would knock the bottom out of a township to reduce the rate a tenth of a mill. This class will do well to open mind and heart to the New Education. Or, if this is too much to demand, let these masters try to rid themselves of that peculiar animus of opposition which is now a grievance to all progressive men.

But, happily, this is a declining brotherhood. The majority of our schoolmasters are men of good abilities and attainments, faithful and reasonably open to the world in which they live. They are doing more and better work than any previous class of masters this country has known. It may seem ungracious to summon them to the unwelcome task of stirring up the people to the dangers besetting the New Education; explaining the improved methods; defending the best things in the present system, and watching every opportunity to exert a legitimate influence on public opinion. If we emphasize this call, it is in the interest of the public, whose servants they are,—the children to whom their lives are dedicated, and themselves, whose finest work is always in peril from the antagonistic forces of superstition, indifference, and the brute hostility of ignorance and avarice.

The press is now open to the discussion of school-affairs as never before. It would not require an undue amount or a disreputable sort of "wire-pulling," in any American city or village, for the superior masters to obtain a hearing for the New Education. Such efforts have resulted in a permanent department of education in influential journals, conducted by superior teachers. The amount of gross and mischievous misrepresentation of school-affairs, in celebrated journals, is a matter of constant amazement. The masters should watch the

press, correct misapprehension, expose misstatements, and keep the people informed concerning the most vital interest of the State. We commend to the schoolmasters of Boston an article in the *Sunday Herald* of February 2d, 1879,—thoroughly misleading and conspicuous for lack of correct information. A year of such mischievous misrepresentation would wake up the Boston mob at both ends of the social scale to an organized crusade against the schools. The fact that so much of this needful work is already done by the masters, is an answer to the plea of pre-occupation. Good work is now being done; but, in every battle, it is the "little more grape" that routs the enemy.

The masters and superintendents should try to put themselves in more vital communication with the people, for the illustration and explanation of their work. True, the public schools are always open to visitation; but the people who ought to visit them are occupied in school hours. An occasional evening lecture, with classes to illustrate the new methods of teaching, would draw the parents, however preöccupied. Every country-district school-house should be open for winter-evening meetings, led by the teacher, for discussion and the instruction of the people. Occasions for the social intercourse of teachers and parents in cities should be made by the masters. What would become of any other class of public men who met their constituents so seldom as the schoolmaster? There is no necessity for this stagnation of popular interest around the school-house.

The masters of our cities can greatly help the country schools. It is possible for them to establish a vital co-operation; to occasionally visit different localities; to make their influence felt at the State House; to become

a power, recognized and feared by every foe of the schools. The welfare of Boston, Providence, Hartford, New Haven, Portland, Concord, and Burlington, is bound up with the most remote township of New England; and the wretched school-keeping and painful indifference to its wretchedness, in whole regions of New England, is a reproach to the able men who preside over the highly-organized schools of those cities.

We believe our best teachers,—men and women,—only need to be told that the people are waiting to hear from them, in this way, to respond. We assure them the people expect them to come to the front, and give a reason for their faith and works in the school-room.

"TEN GREAT GALS."

At the age of sixteen, before we had shed our "round-about," we contracted to "keep school" in district No. 5 for $12.00 per month, and "boarding round." We knew very well the little red schoolhouse standing at the exact center of the district, on the borders of a mighty swamp, the farmhouses scattered about the hills. And we also knew the chronic nuisance of that particular school; a squad of half-a-dozen rough fellows who had emerged into "tail coats," and would hardly relish the discipline of a boy pedagogue in a roundabout. After the first flush of elation at our election, the chilling reflection came back, like a return-wave of ice-water, that, in all human probability, ere our seventeenth birthday should dawn, we should be seen vanishing, head foremost, out of the schoolhouse window into a big snow-drift, propelled by class No. 1 of big boys.

In our anxiety we applied to "Aunt Anna," the general oracle of the household. Aunt Anna was a stalwart maiden of sixty summers, gigantic in proportions, but every inch a lady in her dear, old heart. She had nursed half the children in town through the measles, mumps, and chicken-pox, and was the main stay in all family emergencies. There were sly rumors that the occasional attack of "the fidgets," which overcame the good old lady at night, had some relation to a mysterious black bottle which she always carried in her work-bag; but Aunt Anna, plus "the fidgets," was worth a regiment of ordinary feminines for all the home-made uses of country life.

"Well, now, you are really going to keep school in district No. 5," said Aunt Anna, smoothing down her

big-checked apron, and raising her spectacles for a good long look at the incipient pedagogue, seated at the opposite corner of the fire-place. "Yes, Aunt Anna, I have promised to keep that school; but, between you and me, I am dreadfully afraid to tackle that crowd of big boys. You know what a rough set they are, and one of them has already 'given out' that there will be no board wanted in district No. 5 after the first week." "That's a serious matter; now, let's see if we can't think of something to help you. Now, you see I don't know anything about book-larnin'. No doubt you can cipher that back seat of boys into the middle of next week. But they can fling you over the roof of the schoolhouse in a jiffy, if they have a mind to. I know every family in that district. I've nussed in every house, and taken the measure of every youngster that will come to that school. There's one thing in your favor; *there'll be ten great gals in that school,* and most of 'em are good gals, too. Now, some of them gals are a head taller than you, and two or three of them are right handsome, too. They can twist that crowd of great bashful boys round their little finger if they want to. Now, mind what I tell you; *do you go right to work and gain the affections of them ten great gals, and they'll manage the great boys, while you keep the school.*"

That sounded well; and, armed with this panacea against rebellion, we opened school the Monday after Thanksgiving. It was a rough-looking set up on the high seats,—that row of villainous-looking fellows, either of them big enough to throw us over into the big swamp with one hand! Happily, our first boarding-place was the home of two of the "great gals." Never did we "lay ourselves out" to gain the good graces of the lovely sex as during the first week of that boarding round. We rode on the front seat of the sled with the

tallest girl; played checkers with the second; got all snarled up in a "cat's cradle" with a pretty visiting cousin; and put in a word of explanation for the "hard sums" of all in the long evening at home.

The first crisis came at the beginning of the second week, when a big lout "sauced" the new schoolmaster. Somehow, it crushed us, and for a minute the schoolroom swam round, and the idea of seizing our fur-cap and making for home flitted across our vision. Just then the patter of a light footstep was heard down the long slope of the narrow aisle leading up to the seat of the "ten great gals." The tallest glided down, ostensibly to ask an explanation of a hard sum; but, as we leaned over the slate with a dimness in the eyes, we heard a low whisper in our ear: "*Don't be cast down; we girls will shame that seat of boys into good manners before another week.*" A light broke in; we were "gaining the affections of the ten great gals."

So things drifted for six weeks, when dawned the judgment-day. We had gone to board with a good, motherly woman, who loved us as her own son. A big fire in the parlor greeted our arrival, and a supper fit for the parson himself. After tea our hostess appeared in her best black silk, in her hand a mighty oak "ruler," and sat down before us with the air of a Minerva: "Now, matters are coming to a point in your school; you have been trying to govern that crowd of rascally boys by love, but that has come to an end. To-morrow they'll try to put you out. Take this ruler, and don't come home to me to-morrow night unless you've used it up over the head and shoulders of somebody." There was no appeal from that. A greater than the whole class of "great gals" had spoken, and we felt in our soul that fate was standing at the schoolhouse door.

Were we endowed with the epic rage of a Homer or a Pope, we might possibly depict the scenes of the coming day. How the ugliest loafer in a frock-coat kicked in the door at recess; how, when the trembling young master asked "Who had done that," the big boor lifted his thumb to his nose and executed that significant gyration with the little finger which would make a savage of St. John himself; how, fired with the courage of despair and a vision of our farm-house Minerva, we siezed the big oak ruler, rushed up the inclined plane, upsetting several small children on the way, plunged at the throat of the insolent scoundrel, tore off the collar of his frock-coat, snaked him down to the area before the fire-place, and beat him over the head and shoulders till he roared for mercy; how, at intervals, we cast a glance up at his accomplices and took in the situation, the "ten great gals" had spiked the guns of all but this wretch, who slunk and begged under our hands; how we wound up with an eloquent address, and gave the whipped ruffian his hat with instructions to go home; how his sensible father took off what remained of his dilapidated frock-coat and trounced him till he yelled again, and sent him to school the following day with a compliment to the plucky young master; all this might be sung in heroic verse.

But, if the truth were known, it was not we, but the "ten great gals," that did the business. They had so demoralized the attacking column by the magic of their charms, that only one had the heart to defy the little master, and he dared not lift his hand when the day of battle came. And from that day we crowned dear, old Aunt Anna prophetess of love. *Gain the affections of the "ten great gals" in your schoolroom, "and all things shall work together for good."*

THE MOTHER-TONGUE IN THE SCHOOLS.

The English language can be dealt with in two ways in common schools, as a family horse can be used by a household. An incipient sawbones in the family may persuade the old gentleman to turn over the household Dobbin to him for dissection. He may be slain, stretched on the table, opened up to the minutest muscle, and finally set to adorn the great hall as a beautiful "preparation." Or, the majority of the children may overrule the zeal of the big scientific brother, and Dobbin may be reserved for human uses; to go to mill and to meeting; to plough out the corn; carry little Susie on her first ride; and, on a leisure day, draw the whole family up to the nearest hill-top, where the loveliness of the valley of the Connecticut, or the grandeur of Mt. Washington, may calm and elevate the jaded soul.

In the famous district school of the fathers, now so exalted by grave doctors and genial writers of romance, the mother-tongue was served up in the former style. The fearful exercise called 'parsing' in that ancient university of the people, was as complete an arrangement for cutting the throat, dissecting the form, and varnishing the remains of the language, as the wit of an old-fashioned pedagogue could devise. We parsed *Paradise Lost* without the remotest idea that it was anything but an exercise in English grammar. Years afterward, one rainy day, we fell upon Channing's *Essay on Milton*, and for the first time woke up to the fact that *Paradise Lost* is one of the world's epic poems. The 'analysis' that succeeded the 'parsing' of that re-

mote day was only a more elaborate expedient of the same sort. With no previous acquaintance with literature, or the higher and human uses of the mother-tongue, the high-school boys and girls were shot into the jungle of "subject" and "predicate," drilled in all the highways and by-ways of verbal relations, till the dear old language lay on the floor of the schoolroom, dead as Cæsar's body on the pavement of the Capitol, rent with ghastly stabs.

Until a very late day, our young people owed all their practical knowledge of their native tongue to a taste for reading and writing, acquired after the close of their school years. The instruction in grammar, rhetoric, and composition, sent them forth with a deep-seated hatred of everything connected with these hateful names.

The greatest single advance in school-life within the past twenty years, has been the waking-up of teachers to the fact that the English language should be taught in common schools for its common, human uses; *to enable the people of the United States to speak and write their native tongue with ease, precision, conciseness, and as much elegance as may be; to arouse a love for the best literature, and direct in the best way to read good books.* It is not too much to say that a child sent forth from a public school at the age of twelve, unable to speak and write his native tongue with a fair degree of ability, and destitute of a healthy taste for reading good books, has been badly trained, and has failed in a most important element of his education. Grammar, rhetoric, analysis, composition, should be taught for the sake of the English language, not the English language for their sake. The common school is not a university to work up a crowd of small philological experts, but a people's school to train the children in the master-art

of using their mother-tongue to express the best that is in them, and to open their eyes to the treasures of wisdom hidden in books. Every American citizen, however humble, from the experience of life has gathered up a good deal that is valuable for his fellow-men. The common school should give him the ability to set that forth by speech and pen in a way to make it accessible to his neighbors. Every citizen has leisure sufficient to read many good books, provided he knows how and where to read; and the common school should place him on the threshold of the library of the world.

The first aim of the teacher should be to help the child speak the mother-tongue with ease and propriety. And what an opportunity is afforded in every lesson through the entire school life of the pupil! Do our teachers sufficiently reflect that for six, often for ten, sometimes for fifteen years, the children are placed where they are absolutely forbidden to speak except by their direction? Every word is supposed to be an answer to a direct question, and is to be spoken with the sole purpose of conveying precise information on some well-defined point. If every teacher would insist on a clear, precise, complete answer to every question in the recitation-room, our children would learn the great art of expression better than by any method of special instruction. It is because teachers are often so careless in their own speech, and tolerate such blundering in the reply of the pupil, that the majority of the students in all schools and colleges go forth unable to rise to their feet with ease and naturalness, and tell what they know upon the simplest theme in a way that commands attention and respect. Here, in the daily routine of school life, is the great opportunity for teaching the art of correct and elegant expression.

DeQuincy says that the best writing of English is in the correspondence of the educated women of England. If so, there must be some special method of training in written style in European schools not yet acquired even in our best public and private seminaries. A famous American historian told us he absolutely forbade the teachers of his children assigning an exercise in composition in the regulation way. Indeed, the ordinary way in which subjects of composition are arranged in high schools and academies is certain death to all originality or life in writing. A child well instructed in a primary school can write with ease on a topic which fills its heart and mind, and Shakespeare can write well on no other. The art of training the child to good writing is to know its character and abilities, and watch its enthusiasms so carefully that it can be piloted into the great central current of its better life, and set down cheerfully to express itself by the pen concerning the themes that press for utterance. To send out a child from the grammar or the high school with a horror of the name of composition, and a dread even of ordinary letter-writing, is one of the most glaring abuses of the teacher's office.

And we do not realize that the chief use of books that will be made by the graduates of our schools is for reading. Study in school is only the gymnastic to acquire the art of reading books with the least expenditure of time and mental strength. The lawyer, the doctor, the minister, read books on their several professions. And the man of the world needs, above all things, the taste for the best reading, and the ability to appropriate the contents of the journal, the magazine, and the book, in the most expeditious and exhaustive way. The best thing in our new high-school work is

the revival of interest in English literature. In hundreds of our best high and grammar schools to-day children are being put in connection with the best literature in a way that will be a blessing to their lives, and a benediction to the State. At every stage of the school-life, from the first entrance in the primary, to the graduation-day of the high school, the pupil should be introduced to good books appropriate to its age and capacity. Then the life in the schoolroom will become the opening into the larger life of general culture from reading, which will lift the people out of their materialistic and professional ruts, into the higher realm of manhood and womanhood and intelligent citizenship of the United States.

"IN LOCO PARENTIS."

The courts have again and again decided that the teacher in the common schools of America, during the hours of school, stands in place of the parent; and, like the parent, is responsible to the law of the State. An enlightened and christianized public opinion endorses the ruling of the judges, and upholds the schoolmaster and schoolmistress in the exercise of all authority needful to the proper work of instruction and discipline. It is a great testimonial to the justice and firmness of the American people that any attempt to trample down this rightful rule of the schoolroom by the brute violence of the street, or to undermine it by the intrigues of the priest or the politician, have been so often thwarted. In almost every schoolhouse, the least schoolmaster of competent ability feels himself leaning back against the people of the United States.

But this relation of the teacher to the children is not a mere reproduction of the home-rule. It is a special relation, granted by the State for a specific object,—the education and discipline of the child for the life of the citizen. In some ways it is a broader relation than it is possible for any but the most enlightened and virtuous parents to sustain in the home. Not one mother in a thousand is yet able to lift herself above the narrowness of her own family, clique, or locality, and train her daughter into the politeness of the old gospel, "honor all men." How many a father, even of the "better class" of the foremost city of the land, is up to the discipline that turns out a son ready to 'love his

neighbor as himself.' Who of us that are parents have the high courage and self-sacrifice to insist on the enforcement upon our own offspring, of those immutable laws of mental and moral growth that go on their relentless way in sublime indifference to our weakness or our self-conceit? Now here is the special realm of the teacher,—to be to the child the sort of parent demanded by the State; to represent to it the unswerving demands of the spiritual realm, where knowledge, beauty, and love abide; to lift it out of home-ruts up to the high table-land of the common weal, where it may overlook the mighty toils of citizenship before it is launched on the troubled ocean of American life.

What, then, shall we say of the assembled wisdom of the town meeting, of the gathered dignity of the city council that deliberately places *in loco parentis* a body of men and women chosen for their willingness to work cheap in obedience to some maggot of "economy" that has turned the popular head? Let any unprejudiced, right-minded, intelligent man go through the country towns of the Northern States, in their season of spring "town meeting," not sparing a visit to the common council of the average American city, and study the temper of a large party therein when the appropriation for schools is in question. The great expenditure in these schools is for the wages of teachers; to hire young women of sufficient ability, social experience, and breadth of character, to take half a hundred little ones from the narrowness of their homes, and give them to the State with fit preparation for its imperious demands. But, this year, the journals come to us loaded with the sickening intelligence of a new raid upon the already paltry salaries of these teachers.

Old towns of honorable memory seem to be only in-

flamed by the benevolence of public-spirited men, to withhold the appropriations that alone can make such charity effective. If there could be a first-rate patent motive-power for driving down a township into permanent obscurity, making it a place hateful to all aspiring youth; and shunned by all superior people, we could suggest nothing so complete as the screw of economy, now turned harder every year on the schools by scores of towns between Boston and St. Louis. These townships resound with regrets of the departure of the "good old days"; with imprecations on the neglect and want of appreciation of their rights in public affairs. The plain truth is, they permit themselves to be led by a little knot of selfish men of "property and standing," or by the rantings of a town-meeting demagogue, and leader of the "laboring classes," to this yearly hari-kari. Their lessening influence, and declining prosperity, and social deadness, and religious "coldness," are only the inevitable outcome of this wretched parsimony in that realm of life where all classes have a common interest; the superior education and discipline of children for the duties of life.

It is in the face of this public obliquity, often reënforced by a most offensive private neglect or captious criticism, that the schoolmistress is often called to serve her country. She may be the butt of the small school "reformers" who grind down her salary to starvation rates. She may be left on the other side by the selfish and vulgar "shoddy aristocracy" of the village. She may be in the pillory of the malicious and petty gossip that often makes the life of the faithful teacher a martyrdom. But of one thing nobody can deprive her. While she holds the office of teacher to that group of little ones, she holds a divine commission, countersigned

by the State, to stand in the place of their faithless parents. Nobody can prevent her from educating these children above the pettiness, ignorance, and vulgarity of their homes. Nobody can stay her hand from making of these boys nobler, and wiser, and more patriotic men than the "fathers" who doom her to slave for a pittance in the hardest post of service in the town. She has her blessed reward in returning good for evil; in the love of the little boys and girls, yet too young to know the injustice which she endures; still open to the lessons of wisdom and virtue that will make such a policy impossible in the generations to come. It is this which holds up so many of our noblest men and women to their thankless task in the school-room; that makes these bare and narrow places a temple for a lofty service; that conquers respect, and, in due time, touches the public conscience, always slow to awaken, but sure to do justice in the end. And it is this sense of a spiritual maternity of the dear little ones, a voluntary assumption of the most sacred and tender relation possible for woman, that consoles the heart of many a schoolmistress, who toils on, unsought in marriage, wearing out her youthful beauty and vigor, but all the time gaining in that higher grace which marks her as God's messenger to the people. Verily, it is worth living for, working on the stingiest pittance, to be placed thus, by the Commonwealth and a good Providence, *in loco parentis* to the children who will make the republic that is to be.

THE OTHER-WISE MEN OF THE EAST.

The good, steady-going voters of the State of Maine woke up one morning last autumn to the conviction that the Pine-tree Commonwealth had passed into the hands of a new set of political wise-men. The party of "labor and reform" had reinforced one of the regulation contending parties, and wrested the power from the hands of the organization that had come to reckon on the State as a perpetual preserve. The fact that a township or a Commonwealth changes political front, especially from the reinforcement of one party by a body of citizens bent on some useful reform, is not alarming; rather an omen of better things. Nobody but a chronic partisan denies that there is a great deal to be said in behalf of the movement touching the elevation of large classes of workmen, even in the United States,—where the laborer, politically, is a ruler in a sense that the nobleman of old Europe might envy. This was also the first substantial victory gained by a combination that claims to be the coming power in national politics; and here was an excellent field to make an honorable record in all that tells upon the real elevation of the laboring classes in the whole country.

Unfortunately, this hope of better things was blighted, almost in advance. The first demand that seemed to come up from this new combination for "reform," was a loud and sweeping clamor for a complete revolution of the school system of the State. The better sort of school-men of Maine have been working for the last twenty years, under great embarrassments, but with ex-

cellent effect. They have led New England in the achievement of a State tax for education. They have maintained a creditable, and latterly an exceedingly able State supervision of schools. Their two normal schools have done valuable work, though always with the draw-back of a half-hearted support from the legislature, and the ill-concealed jealousy of great sectarian academies. But the one act which could be regarded as the especial triumph of the working-man, was the recent high-school law, whereby every town, on raising by home taxation a moderate sum, could receive State aid in the establishment of a high school. Under this beneficent statute a great number of schools, of a higher than the average district or grammar grade, have been founded in the State within the past few years; offering to the child of the humblest laborer the outlook for a superior education. Of course this movement in the interest of the whole people had been opposed, as in all the States, by the sectarian and private corporate academical interests, and the regulation crowd of high-joint opponents of everything that proposes to "educate the lower classes above their sphere in life." But it was to be expected that a party that had swept a great Commonwealth in a political revolution, in the interest of the working-man, should hold fast to this as a point well made, and fit to be stuck to at all hazards.

But this new party has unhappily failed when brought to the most vital of all judgment-seats in a free republic. There is one set of men in this country who always and everywhere can be trusted to drive at the throat of the people's common school. By whatever name in politics, or creed in religion, or position in society, he may be superficially designated, the radical animus of that sort of man is hatred to anything but the most meagre and

stinted education of the masses at public expense. This class exists in every community, though only in occasional and half-accidental emergencies does it come into possession of the reins of power. Where it cannot destroy, it cripples; reducing the school to inefficiency by short allowance; and does its best to make the office of teacher intolerable by overwork, and contemptible by reduction of salary.

The new party chose to endorse this unpatriotic and essentially aristocratic policy. The Governor followed hard in the rural track of Governor Robinson of New York, in a general onslaught upon the whole system of free higher instruction, denouncing the high-school law, the normal schools, the Agricultural College, and proposing the wholesale reduction of the school expenditure of the State as a means of economy. The leaders of the new party made early declaration of their intentions in this direction, and set at work with a good will to reduce Maine to the condition of a third-class State, and force her, for the next half-century, to take the back seat.

Happily no State, old or new, north of Mason's and Dixon's line, is prepared for this sort of reform backwards into barbarism. The agitators for ignorance in the State House at Augusta soon found themselves confronted by a spirit that made itself evident, even to their stolid apprehensions. It was soon apparent that destruction would not be tolerated, and the question resolved itself into one of animus. Not able to sweep away the new high-school system, the majority of the Legislature voted to suspend the operation of the law a year. Failing to carry the point of abolition of the normal schools, they have contented themselves with giving them an ugly kick, cutting down their allowance, and generally casting indignity upon them. The

Agricultural College is left to get on as it can upon its own resources. The rate of State taxation for education is reduced. Having done enough to make itself contemptible in the eyes of every workingman of common-sense in the Commonwealth, this sham laboring-man's legislation adjourned and disappeared among its native backwoods, leaving to the people the task of righting the wrong and repairing the mischief at a new deal of votes another autumn.

The good people of this growing Commonwealth now understand that the eyes of the better sort of the American people, of all classes, are fixed on the East. One year more of such legislation in the interest of low-down vulgarity, sectarian ambition, and high-joint contempt for the masses, will hopelessly cripple their excellent system of public education, built up with so much devotion. We look for a reaction in Maine in behalf of the real interests of labor, reform, and decency, that will teach all parties a useful lesson. For there is one fact that the politicians and the priests may as well understand to-day as to-morrow: *Any political party, or any denomination of religionists, that attempts to build itself up by pulling down the American system of free schools, or by destroying any vital branch of it, will go down to the Hades where the old slave aristocracy now slumbers its eternal sleep.* A great many good, and a larger number of the other sort of people in the United States, don't understand this fact. The State of Maine has now an excellent opportunity to impress that radical principle of American policy on the consciousness of the average sectarian priest and partisan politician, in a way that it will remain for the next half-century.

If the laboring class of that great State understand their interest, and have a concern for the future of their

children, they will have a speedy settlement with the demagogues who, in their name, have taken the bread of knowledge out of the mouths of their offspring. Possibly the considerable class of sectarian clergy and private-academy trustees, who have been nagging the high and normal schools the last four years, may not feel inspired by the educational company they now find themselves in. There will be an excellent opportunity for some of the statesmen, relieved from duty at Washington by the late overturn, to stump the State in the interest of that general education and popular intelligence, without which liberty is only a sham. And if others of the great men of Maine could take a vacation from their continental posturing for the Presidency, and put in a few lively gestures and "burning" periods in behalf of the country schoolmistresses and the hard-worked and poorly-paid men who hold up the higher stories of the ark, it might not come amiss. We look for a good report next autumn; a reform of "the reformers," which will place the Pine-tree State once more among the foremost in all things that concern the true welfare of the whole people.

SCHOOL SUPERVISION IN NEW ENGLAND.

No. II.

The progress of efficient school supervision in New England is a curious commentary on the characteristics of that most obstinate people, the Yankees. It is only within the last twenty-five years that anything like the present system of city superintendency has been tolerated in the largest cities of the Eastern States. Even Hartford, Conn., to-day glories in a loyal adherence to her ancient "district" system, and regards herself as "insured" against the peril of superintendency. Boston has never known school superintendence in the sense that Cleveland and St. Louis understand that term. The city superintendent in our Athens is a gentleman who maintains a general oversight of the system; writes a semi-annual report of "suggestions"; escorts distinguished strangers through the educational paradise of which he is the major-domo; and wields all the power his personal skill as a politician and persuader of school committee, supervisors, and masters can achieve. Several of our largest New-England cities have a superintendency only in name. A few secondary cities, like Springfield, Worcester, and New Bedford, are the only places in New England where the true idea of a superintendent who represents the school committee to the teachers and pupils is apprehended and carried into effect. Our New-England towns and villages of 5,000 to 10,000 people suffer greatly from the lack of a thorough handling of the schools. They vibrate between a fit of vigorous superintendency and a revolution of the "masses," which either abolishes the office or places one

member of the school committee in a sort of quasi-supervisory position.

There can be no doubt to an intelligent observer that the present state of supervision in the cities and large villages in New England is a serious drawback to the efficiency of the schools and the economy of their administration. In Boston the old reign of the masters has been followed by the triumvirate of masters, supervisors, and superintendent, to the injury of all concerned and the confusion of the people. Boston is a city of great wealth, and can well afford to pay as much money as at present for popular education. But a large per cent. of that expenditure is a tax imposed upon the people to gratify the whim of "individuality" among its school-men. No crotchet in school-keeping is so expensive as the chronic mania of the New-England high-toned schoolmaster to be responsible to nobody this side of Omniscience. It places the children of each school precinct, and, through them, the majority of the least-informed parents, greatly in the power of a man who, by virtue of long occupation, skill in manipulating school-district politics, or some element of special superiority, is master of the situation. Such a teacher often holds on for years, resolutely defying the school committee which he has engineered into office, resisting the new education, inspiring distrust of normal schools, and through the despotic ruling of his subordinates, perpetuating his own antiquated and inefficient style of operation. Thus, while the people of our New England cities and large towns imagine themselves "free as air" in the management of their schools, and do indulge in an extraordinary amount of small interference, grumbling, and embarrassing "economical" experimenting, there is no part of America where so many children are

virtually in the hands of obstinate masters, wedded to ancient methods, — their hearts fully set within them not to be superintended or baffled in any way in their favorite notions of training the youthful mind.

As a result our New-England school-keeping has not yet reaped the full result of the large infusion of educated and trained women into the corps of instruction. Our State normal and city training-schools, excellent high schools, and famous academies are sending out the best material in the country for women-teachers. But the ordinary normal graduate in the larger places too often falls into the hands of a schoolmaster whose ideal of his vocation is to "mould" his "lady assistant.' This moulding process, in too many cases, includes the persistent effort to baffle and confuse the ideas of pedagogics she has received at her normal school; to make her the cog in the graded wheel of which he turns the crank, and bring her into final subjection to his ideas. If the sapient legislators who are engaged in the lofty enterprise of starving out the normal schools of New England could appreciate the fact that what they call a "public opinion" against normal graduates, is generally only the opinion of an unsympathetic schoolmaster, magnified to an appalling specter by the clever management of a pedagogical stereopticon, they might pause in their destructive raid upon the most reliable agency of our school system. We have no disposition to underrate the culture, the devotion, and the ability of the school teachers of New England. But in no class of professional people in the New-England States does the old sense of a personal right to administer irresponsible power, once assumed by the clergy, so obstinately hold on. And to say this power is often used to the injury of the schools, the hindrance of new and improved

methods of education, and the baffling of true economy in school expenditure, is only to assert what is evident to the vast majority of the non-professional educational class in these States.

The cure for many of the evils that still afflict our city and village schools of New England, is thorough supervision and superintendency. In most of our cities a first-class superintendent, armed with full executive powers, responsible only to the school committee, a man or woman of large experience, open mind, sympathy with the best elements of the new education,—in the best sense a public man or woman, and a leader in society,—can do his work. Such a superintendency cannot be obtained without a competent salary, and the chronic habit of our smaller cities of starving out a good superintendent as soon as his services are really valuable, and calling in a cheap-jack who will work for the wages of a bookkeeper, has wrought untold loss in the efficiency of the schools. The best possible economy in a town of 10,000 to 30,000 people is to choose a school committee of moderate size and the best quality, and sustain it in putting the management of the schools greatly into the hands of a superintendent who is an expert in the best sense; paying him the market value of his services. In many of our smaller cities and larger villages, the best person for this post will be found in a woman of long experience as a teacher, gifted with the energy and tact which are so conspicuous in a large class of our best women teachers of common schools.

The actual saving in money that comes from the presence of an expert, by whom all the expensive projects of teachers and outside reformers can be reviewed, and who is a watch-dog over the whole field of school economies, in most cases will pay the salary of the most

accomplished official. But this is the least of the advantages of effective superintendency. An executive officer of this character is always on the watch to detect rising merit in any teacher; to distribute the force of instruction for the highest advantage of the pupils; to defend the young teachers against the petty tyranny of their superiors; to represent the school committee to the parents, and be a wall of defence between the children and incompetent or unjust instructors; to arrange courses of study and maintain the fit relations between all grades, especially the grammar and high schools, and see that no part of the system is crippled to give undue prominence to another.

In short, the time is upon us when the cities and large villages of New England must revise their ideas of economic and effective school-keeping, demand the best for their money, pay more liberally, and trust more generously, the best superintendency and supervision. We only repeat the growing conviction of the wisest school-men and careful observers, that in this direction is the chief opportunity for the improvement of our public schools.

SCHOOL SUPERVISION IN NEW ENGLAND.
No. II.

The most vital question, just now, concerning the organization of popular education in America is the supervision of country schools. By common consent the cities of the United States have adopted superintendency; the few exceptional cities really vesting supervisory power in superintendents call by different names. In some of the Middle, Western, and Southwestern States, the expedient of county or district supervision has been in operation for a considerable time. That it has been, on the whole, a great benefit, no well-informed observer will dispute. That it has been sometimes abused, perverted, and even swamped by political partisanship and a low state of feeling about public education, nobody who knows will deny. Still, the weighty declaration of a body of men like the Convention at Columbus, Ohio, that such a system is absolutely essential to the reformation of the country schools of that State, must be conclusive. The failure of county superintendence has been the common misery of all good things that depend on the popular verdict for support. The thing aimed at, — to place our country district schools under a firm, intelligent, progressive supervision, — is still the crying need of popular education in America.

It may not have been in vain that the people of New England have not, at once, followed this lead in the experiment of country supervision. Our friends beyond the Berkshire hills can hardly appreciate the peculiarity

of New-England civilization; the intense individualism that pervades its population of English descent and still dominates the rural districts, whose population is largely of English blood. Neither will it do to sneer at New-England school-keeping on the ground that it has not fallen into line with all the new methods that have been marked with such brilliant results in the great cities of our new Western Empire. While these new methods, under the powerful superintendency of a few able Western men, have produced wonderful results in certain localities, yet the recent experiences of a city like Chicago point to the weak spot in all Western school administration. In all new or rapidly-growing American communities, the mass of the people are too busy to watch anything so quiet and out of sight as a public school. The administration of public education falls into the hands of a few men, and unless some sharp issue of a semi-educational character is raised, remains in their hands. Thus while the popular attention is preoccupied, a style of supervision as despotic as the old-fashioned college faculty may prevail, and, if it be an intelligent supervision, work prodigious results with a power that astonishes the world. But one election-day in Chicago, Cincinnati, or St. Louis, may disturb the very foundations of the brilliant school systems of these cities, and precipitate them into a battle for existence in their present shape. This danger will beset all American school-keeping until the great majority of the people are thoroughly converted to a faith in public education, and are sufficiently interested to keep watch of what is done with their children.

We believe no portion of our country is so near this desirable state as the more vital parts of New England. In Massachusetts almost as a whole, largely in Connec-

ticut, Rhode Island, and the more western portions of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, the teacher is as thoroughly under the popular eye as the clergyman, the doctor, or the member of the Legislature. There have been exasperating controversies in many of our New England towns and cities concerning the economies of public-school keeping during the past years of financial disaster. But the party that proposes to essentially change the system itself; to destroy the high school; to carry back the district school to the days of the fathers; to seriously interfere with the graded system or oppose the introduction of reasonable improvements, is confined to a few stingy millionaires, a squad of conceited impracticables, and the self-appointed leaders of political workingmen's associations. There is as little probability that New England will permanently change her system of school-keeping, or set herself against the march of improvement in methods of instruction, as that she will become Catholic, or back down on a monarchial form of government.

But, from this very reason, because so many people must be consulted to do anything, and because the element of individualism is so predominant in all public affairs, New England moves slowly in the direction of supervision of country schools. But the movement is sure, if slow. Just now, New England in her gradual, thorough way, is occupied in abolishing the old district system, in which the election of teachers, and general direction of instruction, is in the hands of local "prudential committees," elected by the people of one school district. This good work is almost completed in Massachusetts, and the schools of the townships placed under the control of a general school committee, chosen for three years by the vote of the town. Massachusetts

and New Hampshire have just passed the law admitting woman suffrage in the choice of the school committee, and for several years women have served as members of the board. In many of our smaller townships, one member of the school committee is appointed to do the work of supervision and take the salary of the whole body. This is a decisive step forward. It will be taken by all the New England States, and within a few years every township will be placed under the superintendence of a committee chosen for several years by popular vote, entrusted with the sole power of administering the educational interests of the community.

In Massachusetts a step has been taken beyond this. The State Board of Education, a body consisting of nine members appointed by the Governor, elects a secretary, who is virtually State Superintendent of Education; and a corps of agents who are constantly visiting the country schools, holding institutes, and in many ways seeking to improve the school-keeping of the rural districts. They work under many disadvantages: the absence of power to enforce anything; the condition of many of the old and drooping townships of the more retired portions of the Commonwealth, and the inevitable jealousies of the teachers and committees. Still, a great work is being done. Secretary Dickinson has inaugurated his administration by a systematic campaign for district supervision of country schools. The bill inspired by him, which obtained a respectable vote in the Legislature of 1879, provided that the chairman of each township school committee should be the member of a district-board who should elect a district superintendent of schools. This superintendent should represent the State as inspector, examiner of teachers, in the arrangement of courses of study, and should be ap-

proved by the Board of Education before election. It may be that in the effort to avoid the danger of popular election of district superintendent and to respect the position of the township school committee, the plan of Secretary Dickinson is too elaborate and schoolmasterish for public approval. But we believe he has grasped the central difficulty of the country supervision, — the necessity to preserve in full vigor the local interest in, and responsibility for free education. This interest is represented by the township school committee, and any school that over-rides this body and removes the governing power of the schools from the direct influence of the people, will fail to commend itself to American institutions and habits. But, on the contrary, if the State undertakes to support a system of instruction by general taxation, it has the right to insist on a fixed element of qualification in teachers, and an oversight of methods, as the condition of supplying its quota of expense. In some way, possibly by the reconstruction of the Board of Education, and making each member an expert this good result will be attained.

If the present dangerous and demoralizing rush of American-life to cities is to be arrested, it must be by the elevation of country life. It will be in vain for poets, preachers, or statesmen to call upon the youth of the United States to remain in the country and grow up amid the influences of agricultural pursuits, if the country is to remain a century behind the city in vital elements of modern civilization. The stingy, slow, coarse, materialistic type of agricultural life in vast districts of our country; a life in which intolerable drudgery is varied only by a monotonous social visitation; while culture and refinement, elegance of living and superiority in anything but money-making, are the passport to a

surly, low-lived jealousy; will never be willingly accepted by the better sort of our young people and never ought to be. A cultivated family cannot be blamed for refusing to bring up its children in a village in New England or Ohio, where the schools tolerate the old, slow, stupid fumbling with the children of thirty years ago. A thorough system of supervision of country education, which will assure the people that their schools are handled by competent teachers and taught by the best methods, would call back to the country thousands of families who have now abandoned it, and greatly assist to lift this realm of life, as a whole, out of the ruts of drudgery, vulgarity, and obstinate ignorance and prejudice. Instead of an assault to be repelled, this reform should be a movement from the heart of every country district to put itself in line with modern civilization.

"THE CHILD GREW."

One of the most serious drawbacks in the school-education of children is the fact that so many fond parents have a notion that their own special darling is exempt from the divine law of gradual growth into manhood or womanhood. They read in the good book that even the son of God was not excused from the slow, painful process of growth in "wisdom" as well as "stature," and "favor with God and man." But they fancy, somehow, that the Almighty Lawgiver has let off their John or Mary from the common lot of childish and youthful experience, and what was never yet done by anybody can be achieved, as a matter of course, by them.

Every child, save their own, must grow in ability to study, to digest knowledge and to reduce it to practical working force and character. The vast majority of children find this an exceedingly slow process. Indeed, some of the most famous people the world has ever seen, like Walter Scott and like Abraham Lincoln, found themselves at a pretty advanced age in the category of greenhorns. But this particular father does not see why his John, eight years of age, should not "drive business" in the primary school as he does in the counting-room, at the age of fifty. And this ambitious mother is in a chronic quarrel with teachers and school-committees because her girl does not sweep through the grades of the high school in the style that Mrs. Jones' Sally made a "ten strike" in society and landed herself in a brilliant engagement at the end of her first season.

A large and noisy class of educational "reformers"

are abusing our school systems as "rotten," "unpractical," "visionary," because they do not turn out boys at fifteen fully equipped to launch themselves and relieve their parents from their support; or "sprout" the quality of independent judgment and self-sacrificing, persevering industry in girls at fourteen, which not one man or woman in a thousand ever acquires and few people learn, save as the result of a tussle of years with a rough world.

But the most unhappy delusion in this class of people is that the schools do for their children only what is apparent in their minds and characters on graduation day. Leaving out the element of parental fondness and the indestructible hopefulness with which the world persists in welcoming every new generation, the actual condition,—mental, moral, and spiritual,—of any set of children on graduation-day, at twelve or sixteen, is not especially encouraging. We find them limp, green, full of impracticable crotchets and conceits; in danger of collision with the everlasting laws at every step; too often with defects of character that fill us with apprehension for their near future. Why have not these "experts" in the school-room, with their new methods of instruction,—these palatial school-houses and big school-tax bills,—left a stronger impression on this crowd of youngsters? It is "easy as preaching" to fling a bitter and satirical leader at the school system and authorities, the morning after such an exhibition; especially if the writer is a man who has no children, or none that he is acquainted with, from his preoccupation in swinging the world every morning. The press and the drawing-room, to say nothing of the pulpit, resound with the depreciation of all our schools for their inability to mould character and mind, and leave

their graduates finished examples of the transforming power of education.

But if these critics could be permitted to follow these children out into actual life and mark how each succeeds, in a manner; how some do attain in an eminent degree; how, gradually, often as slowly as the unfolding of the buds in a late spring, the results of the faithful work of teachers as well as parents appear; they might consent to spare us a little of their Olympic wrath and scorn. The fact is that the best results of all instruction of children cannot be seen in childhood. By the very nature of the creature, the lower side of all instruction first attracts the attention. It is the superficial, the material, the outward and sensational in school and teacher, that earliest makes its mark even on the best of pupils. The higher element of the lesson; the upper side of the method of instruction; the indescribable art that links the flying minutes of the recitation-hour into a poem or picture; the hints and suggestions that only provoke inquiry in the superior scholars; especially the moulding effects of a well-digested course of study or discipline, and the silent, unconscious teaching of a strong and lovely character in the master;—these things cannot bear hasty fruit. It is things of this sort that, like the good seed in the parable, sown broadcast in a schoolroom, share the fate of all high things in this strange world, falling by the wayside, upon the rocks, in the shallow soil, in the good ground. And in proportion as this element in the school-life of children is effective, is it shy, circuitous, obscure, and provokingly incapable of being summed up in those pretentious tables of statistics which are the "valley of dry bones" in our civilization. All the higher influences, divine or human, must have time to make their mark. And the best

result of the first day's instruction in the primary school may be just rising on the horizon when the old man's eye lights up with the flush of his dawning immortality.

How often is every thoughtful man made aware that his first real understanding of his own childhood and youth, his first valuable appreciation of his home, church, school,—especially of his superior teachers,—comes with the experience of years! How often, at some crossing of the roads, in a dreary section of his life's journey, a remembered word of advice, a look out of a face now twenty years under the sod, a struggle over a problem, or a tussle against a just chastisement in the old school-room, comes up like an angelic figure, guiding and strengthening! So must it be with the higher methods of our best new school-keeping. Because it is superior, must its higher outcome be waited for during the whole life of its subjects. The reckless people who, in the interest of a cheap economy or a hand-to-mouth theory of the practical, persist in harassing the schools and keeping the best teachers always on the anxious seat, may be assured that it is their own impatience, and not the advanced education of the time, that is at fault. Keep at the child in the best way revealed to you, and the child will grow.

WOMEN AT THE POLLS.

As far as heard from, the registration of women voters for the school committee in Massachusetts goes on more actively in the country townships than in the cities. This is as it should be. For the last few years a considerable number of these townships have placed women on school committees. The women in all country districts are brought in closer connection with the little district schools and their teachers than is possible in the cities. A very large proportion of the women in any respectable New-England township are of the better sort, accustomed to a general social and moral interest in the welfare of the community. They largely control the churches, direct the charities, and keep alive the interest in Temperance, Village Improvement, and the whole upper side of country life.

It is certainly high time that a new influence of some kind should revise the school district in many of these little townships of New England. No one but a careful observer can estimate the damage to the schools from the heartless and stolid stinginess of hundreds of these boards of school committee-men, during the past five years. It is not too much to say that the entire class of superior teachers in these towns is in the market, biding its time to remove to more favored localities. A little knot of wealthy and influential people in league with the leaders of the lower sort of "labor reformers," infuriated with the rage for township "economy," can easily suppress the average school committee, bulldoze the average town meeting into a destructive policy with

the schools, and tear down, in a year, the best things achieved by many years of faithful administration. We believe the women of such townships will justify the new trust given them by the Commonwealth. They will improve the *personelle* of the school committees, in sist on more thorough and frequent visitation of the schools, expose the feebleness of incompetent teachers, and demand fair appropriations for education by the town meeting. And we shall be surprised if we do not witness a general brightening up in the structure, furnishings, and surroundings of the average country schoolhouse from the same source. Spite of the great improvements in the country schoolhouse during the past twenty years, it still remains far below a fair standard as a fit habitation for the people's children, especially through the long months of our desperate winter climate. Few respectable housewives in Massachusetts would consent to live, through any season, in a house so placed and so bare of all comforts and attractions as the district schoolhouse. We believe the exercise of the suffrage will awaken a personal interest in this side of school life. The most important village and township improvement, at present, is the reconstruction of the schoolhouse, and the general civilizing and refining of the life therein.

We also may hope for a decided advance in the teaching of morals and manners in our country schools from this source. For the past few years the partisan theologians and the "liberal leagues" have raised such a senseless din and dust of controversy about this vital interest of the schools that their teachers have, too often, been frightened into a sort of moral paralysis. If there is one fact evident, even in New England education, it is the absolute necessity of more vigorous and

better methods of character-training, especially in the country schools. The first condition of this improvement is the displacement of the large number of youthful, untrained, half-educated, characterless girls, who now flounder through the daily confusion of a six-hours' fumbling with a group of children, and the substitution of women of mature character, and resolute moral purpose. For a wise, Christian, educated woman, an adept in the beautiful methods of the new education, backed by the superior women of an American country township, will find no difficulty in training her scholars in "good morals and gentle manners"; spite of the sore corns of zealous ecclesiastics, or the fury of the new high priests of secularism.

In the nineteen cities and fifty larger villages of the State, we apprehend the chief difficulty will be to persuade the majority of good and sensible women, who are now overworked and confused by the cares of our new social life, to take on even the slight added responsibility of voting for the school committee. In these cities and large towns the schools are more generously supported, far better housed and taught, and much more sensitive to public opinion through the whole range of administration, than in the country. It is unfortunate that a class of violent, impracticable, and fussy ladies of culture and position who, for the last few years, have been pushing their vagaries on common school-keeping through the press, should in some instances have rushed to the front and called the women to a crusade in which they are to be the standard-bearers. The evils against which they declaim in our city graded schools, either exist chiefly in their own imagination, or are inseparable from republican institutions. The animus of their reform is the effort to change the common

school of the whole people to a sort of training-seminary for the "industrial classes," where the sons and daughters of the mechanics and laborers of cities shall be fitted to take the places of their parents, content to plod on in the old European style of a meek submission to an inevitable lot in life.

Of course this is only the dream of a small class, and least of all dreams liable to become a reality. But it is the duty of the great mass of sensible, Christian women in our cities to go to the polls, next autumn, and vote for school officers who can be relied on, at least, not to wreck the schools we have, in a reckless experimenting in regions where the wisest instructors are most in doubt.

We also need this great conserving force of our best womanhood especially to neutralize the weight of the mass of ignorant women which ere long will be organized, by political and ecclesiastical demagogues, in the attempt to break down the common-school system of Massachusetts. That system will remain, and gradually adjust itself to the changing conditions of New-England life as long as the better elements of every community keep watch and ward over it. It will be a mighty comfort to the band of faithful men who have stood to their guns during the past few years, to be reinforced by the army of noble women whose zeal and courage for the children have often held them up to a distasteful duty. And we have great hope that the act of voting will stimulate many a visionary lady, or humble washerwoman, to visit the schools. More than half the opposition to our improved city school-keeping, among women, is the result of profound ignorance of what the schools really are, and the reliance on the gossip of school-children for the little, distorted information they do possess. A moderate acquaintance with the

ideals and the actual achievements of our leading American educators would silence a great deal of bitter accusation, and enlist in the practical work of educational reform large numbers of women whose best energies now run to waste. So, by all means, let the women in country and city go to the polls in Massachusetts, and in the fear of God and the wisest love for the children, cast their first vote.

THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW EDUCATION.

Eighteen centuries ago the Great Teacher of mankind struck the key-note of a higher civilization when he said: "*Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.*" Regarded only as a training-school for the education of mankind in this world, the method of the Divine Teacher anticipated our best school-keeping to-day. The old order of Pagan society was emphatically an arrangement for grown men, in which the women took seats very far back, and the children were scarcely heard of. The Christian civilization of an American State reverses this order of seating, bringing the little children to the front, supported by the women, with the solid men arrayed for heavy work and a reserve in the background.

The Great Teacher told the world that childhood is nearest the source of all wisdom; that, spite of inherited tendencies for evil, every little child looks upon the face of the Father, and has an infinite horizon of possibility and hope; that there is a natural, divine way of developing his nature which can be learned by man; and if he is educated, "led out," in this way, this foolish and wicked world of ours will be regenerated by wise and holy men and women taking the place of those who have passed away. So when the Great Teacher took little children in his arms and blessed them, and said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," he anticipated Pestalozzi, Froebel,—all our new and beautiful methods of instruction in school, and the great work now going on in civilized lands to serve and bless

this world by bringing out the little ones in the true order of their life.

Of course this method of educating little children was too simple and profound to be comprehended at once. Five hundred years ago, in Europe, education was regarded by the learned orders chiefly as a system of forcing young men of superior abilities into a straight-jacket of Latin, and crabbed, scholastic metaphysics, with little regard to natural aptitudes. One of the greatest yearly anniversaries in the New England kitchen of a generation ago, was the night of sausage-making. The great tray, piled with savory chopped meat (no dead dogs nor cats need apply) stood in the center of the big table. The stoutest woman in the household, with sleeves rolled up to the elbows, crammed the fragrant mass into the big tin sausage-filler. Then, fixing the cover on the nozzle, she brought the whole weight of shoulders and back slowly to bear upon the wooden pestle till the sausage-skin was filled, to the infinite delight of the youngsters, who looked on and sometimes "raised Ned" by slyly pricking the distended skin at the critical point, earning, thereby, a smart switch from the stick that hung over the fireplace. That homely process often reminds us of the old scholastic method of university education,—the scholar being as thoroughly "filled" with Aristotle and "Latiny" as the sausage-skin was crammed with its "meat." It is one of the standing arguments for the indestructibility of human nature, that it has not been destroyed by the assaults of its schoolmasters. Yet, even amid that dreary night of culture, now and then a great man caught a glimpse of a more natural and rational way of treating the child.

In the "fullness of time" came Pestalozzi, and after-

wards Froebel, with the group of great men and women (some of them of even more practical genius) who have revised the whole method of instructing little children. Pestalozzi saw the radical truth of all school-keeping when he took, as the model school, the home of a good wise mother, and told the simple story,—"*How Gertrude teaches her children.*" He brought the bewigged, pompous schoolmasters of Europe to this peasant home, and bade them watch this plain, Christian mother as she brought up her family of little ones; to see how she taught them to walk, and talk, to observe, to do the host of things every baby must learn; how she brought out their mental and moral nature, and moulded the character of each child in a way to preserve its originality, while it was held fast to the everlasting laws of wisdom, beauty, and love. At once a great light sprang up in the school-room, and from that day on the schoolmistress and the schoolmaster have been taught to learn their matchless art by studying childhood, watching the best habits of good mothers and fathers, specially looking for the ways by which Divine Providence leads out the child's faculties into the life of youth and maturity.

Thus, while there has been a great deal of attention given to the higher education in the university and the professional school, the greatest advance of our day has been in the marvellous improvements in the handling and instruction of little children at school. The school buildings have been greatly improved, and made more fit for the wholesome and profitable habitation of children. The methods of study, in many schools, have been greatly advanced, and all things taught with less wear and tear of brain, and far less trounsing of the body. The school-books and apparatus have shared in the advance.

But the greatest effort in our best modern school-keeping, has been in the preparation of teachers. In one respect the old, common, district school of New England had a great advantage. It was taught, in winter, by a man, often a student in college or a graduate; in summer by the best young woman in town. Yet few of the superior teachers of that day had ever studied the art of teaching; and the methods of imparting knowledge, as we remember them in our childhood, in the best of these schools, were often barbarous. The few bright boys and girls, who were "quick at figures," or stood at the head of the spelling-class, were well off; but the little children were terribly neglected. Their whole discipline consisted of a dull lesson in the alphabet, or reading, two or three times a day; the remainder of the six hours given up to sleep, rolling off the benches, "cutting capers," dodging the switch, and a general state of unrest and torment. But now the well-instructed primary teacher of children under ten years of age has made a new world of the common schoolroom. The vital interest of the greatest minds now in the educational field, is given to this fundamental problem; how best to handle children under ten or twelve years of age. It is felt by all competent judges that a child, rightly taught till the age of twelve years, and then let loose on the world, as it now is constituted in the foremost States of this Republic, with all helps to culture in libraries, lectures, journalism; free church and free discussion, is in a better way to grow up a wise man or woman, and a good citizen, than a student caught at five and drilled till twenty-five in the old unnatural ways of the past, which were such a strain on body and mind. The ablest men of the present generation have been obliged to spend years in un-

learning the artificial habits of thought and views of things, learned with so much labor in the great universities or schools of professional life. And the colleges and professional school to-day, in too many instances, are the last hiding-place of the old, mechanical system of mental sausage-filling, which turned out graduates as regular and monotonous as the links of sausage that used to tempt our appetite, hanging on the hooks in mother's pantry, in the "days of auld lang syne."

LITERARY ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE COMMON SCHOOLS.

Our neighbor, the *Atlantic Monthly*, has risen from breakfast with its jolly "Autocrat," and girded itself for the abolition of the American common school. For, if the educational column in its December number is anything but the first chapter of a new serial romance of its favorite European-cosmopolitan order, our present city public school should at once give place to a new compulsory, double-headed institution for the training of a generation of workmen, instructed betimes in the difficult American art of "not rising above their sphere in life." According to this educational pronunciamento, the present American city graded-school system is rearing up a nation of idlers. It throws contempt on agricultural and mechanical pursuits; wastes the time of the children of the working-classes which should be occupied in "industrial training"; is a failure as a school of character; in short, is not a common school, but a professional seminary for the training of clerks, counter-jumpers, "drummers," and discontented young women. The cure is radical. Make public education a double-headed training in the elements of knowledge and the "use of tools." The girls may be content with one tool,—the needle. But, for the boys, a more complex chest of tools is required in a complete workshop attachment to the school-house, in which a mechanical expert shall conduct Young America through an elaborate, preliminary training in the use of all implements as a sort of preparatory tuning of the instruments be-

fore the grand burst of harmony that shall usher in our new industrial millennium, where every young American shall go to his own place and keep it. Verily, between Father Scully, President Eliot, and the expert of the *Atlantic*, we seem on the point of setting up a new "Cambridge platform" in public education, as notable as its old-time namesake in theology.

But there are several rotten timbers under the *Atlantic's* department of this platform, which expose its philosophical architects to a sudden letting down to Mother Earth. The whole *Atlantic* scheme rests upon a series of assumptions, possible only to a class of people thoroughly aloof from our common American life; amusing themselves by mapping out a revised and corrected America as unreal as the America of the novels of Mr. Howells and Mr. James.

First: This critique assumes that the children of the working-people, as a class, are carried through the complete system of city graded schools, as laid down in the school committee's report. That system, on paper, covers a period of fifteen years, from the ages of five to twenty. But a glance over the reports of the most completely educated cities in New England will reveal the relative use of the system by the children. In no city in New England are all the children even in the primaries; neither do one-tenth enter, nor one-twentieth of them graduate, from the high school. The two hundred of the five thousand who take the entire course in a flourishing New England city of 30,000 people, furnish, probably, twenty young men to the colleges, thirty young women to the woman's universities and the profession of teaching; while the remainder will be found distributed through the higher walks of business, the trades, the professions, and the more intelligent circles

of home and social life. Meanwhile, the upper classes of the grammar schools only retain the more intelligent and persevering, while the vast majority of the children, in whose behalf the school is to be offered up, even in New England, seldom receive more than six years instruction; years of two hundred working-days each,—five hours a day. Indeed, when we subtract from the school-life of this class of city children the unavoidable waste of sickness, truancy, and family indifference or necessity, it is safe to say that the average workman's child has not more than five thousand hours in his life for that training and instruction in school which shall qualify him for the common duties of American citizenship. Of this pittance the literary gentlemen of the *Atlantic* would abridge an essential part, for the compulsory drill in plain sewing and the use of tools.

Again, this reasoning assumes that the people of American cities, of all classes, will be willing to pay for a system of schools more expensive than the present, adjusted only to the supposed needs of operatives and mechanics. For if this scheme carries, the daughters of the "toiling masses" will rightly demand the same elaborate training in the use of tools as the boys. Within ten years the improved sewing-machine will banish the old class of sewing-girls to the realm of *Atlantic Monthly* fiction; and the great mass of working-girls will crowd the avenues of the lighter mechanical trades. Nowhere can the money be found to support this training by mechanical experts save by the overthrow of the whole region of the upper grammar, high, and training school. This, probably, the Cambridge platform proposes. Then, we are invited to believe that the well-to-do people, who pay the bulk of the school-tax, will consent to perpetuate a secular school

in which their own children can obtain only that education devised by a group of magazine writers and scientific experts for the development of the working and the social convenience of the "superior" class in our city life.

Once more: it is assumed that the city graded school of to-day is doing essentially the work of committing text-books to memory, which was so large a part of its routine a generation ago. But, in every northern city and in multitudes of our larger villages, the new methods of education are established and bearing fruit. That "new education" is the best discipline known to man for waking up and developing the faculties of the child in the divine order of growth, and bringing him in vital contact with science and literature in a way that shall furnish a practical method of acquiring knowledge through his future life. The present style of primary and grammar school, if intelligently administered, is the best preparation for the career of a ploughman or a poet,—for the girl who "tends baby," or drills buttons, and the girl who anticipates five years in Europe after her graduation at Vassar. The proposition to destroy this people's school in favor of the educational hybrid presented for baptism by the *Atlantic* club, involves a characteristic assumption of the verdancy of the average American mind.

And all through this remarkable plan runs the contemptuous assumption that large numbers of city boys and girls are being thoroughly demoralized in their habits of work and general style of character by the public schools. A statement more thoroughly unjust and untrue concerning the better class of American city children can hardly be made. There never was, and there is not now, in this world, a great body of

children and youth doing so much and so good work, and bearing themselves in a manner so praiseworthy, as the mass of the pupils of our public schools who have any fair chance of good supplementary training in the home and the church. There are plenty of idle and wicked boys and slip-shod girls in our cities. They are the vagrant class that swarm the streets of every city beyond New England; the multitudes who are being gathered into inferior parochial schools by sectarian priests; the considerable crowd for whom the daily discipline at school is persistently baffled by a low, reckless, or restless life at home. To thousands of such neglected children the public city schoolmistress is now a soul-mother, and the master a spiritual father indeed. Where one child is made discontented with common life in the public schools, a hundred are saved from the perdition of wicked homes. The children who are the good and faithful scholars in the schools carry with them the same qualities into all the relations of American life. And to arraign the schools because of their occasional failure to turn out "A, No. 1" citizens is to hold up a test which would shut every American church, decimate American families, knock the bottom out of Harvard and Yale, and even send the *Atlantic* to literary Coventry. This reckless and cruel impeachment of American city school-children may be set down as another of the "eccentricities of literary genius" which we, common mortals, are so often required to accept as the compensation for the delights and honors of a national literature.

And, finally, this new scheme assumes that there is, just now, a rising "boom" against the common school-system of American cities, and an influential demand for the Cambridge platform. There is a growing de-

termination among great numbers of thoughtful people that every public school-house in America shall have, behind its course of study, a living teacher; that the mechanism of memoriter recitation and the memory of mere word-mongering shall give place to a vital contact of soul with soul; in short, that the new education shall step out from the covers of the yearly school report and move, incarnate, in the man or woman set by the people to control the school. The masses of thoughtful parents do not propose to have their schools "secularized," according to the programme of Lawyer Ingersoll, or "christianized" according to the bull of Father Scully. And they propose to make the whole work of school-education tell in the moulding of their children into a more intelligent, a broader and a more virtuous citizenship. The trouble to-day, at Fall River, at Pittsburg, in the coal regions, is not the lack of special industrial training, but of the first principles of genuine American manhood in multitudes of workmen, born and trained in the European idea of society, which is now glorified in certain select circles, East and West, but received its death-blow at Appomattox Court House. The trouble with the wives of American workmen is not so much the lack of ability to patch their husband's trousers and darn the family pile of stockings as that timid, superstitious, off-in-a-corner style of semi-foreign womanhood which blights their higher maternal influence over their growing boys and girls. The cure for our rising American communism is not compulsory training at public expense in the use of tools, but a general liberation and elevation of the upper regions of manhood and womanhood through the lower realm of American life.

The influential masses of our people will not make

haste to crowd the new Cambridge platform. They look upon this whole theory of popular education as the outcome of certain styles of high culture and exclusive society, excusable enough under the circumstances, but absurdly unadapted for the exigencies of our new American life. The present system of American free education is far from perfect, but it is, on the whole, in its great lines of operation, its improving methods, and the increasing efficiency of its teachers, the best thing yet for the average American child. In due time, as soon as the most reliable of those experts in mechanical training will devise the best methods, our men of wealth will find establishments to bridge the chasm between the city grammar school and the shop and factory. All that is needed in this way will surely come. But, meanwhile, neither priest nor expert, nor pessimist social philosopher nor airy literary romancer will be able to switch the solid American people off the great common track of the American common school.

SCHOOL PLUS TEACHER.

We can say, with justice, that the American common school of the last 250 years has saved the country to republican institutions. The New England pioneer alone attempted to educate the whole people before the Revolution, and the 250,000 soldiers of New England, the majority of the entire enrollment, carried the Colonies through the war. The fact is notorious that the Union was saved, twenty years ago, by the States that have done best for the intelligence of the whole people in the common school, and that the public character and policy of the reconstructing Nation is slowly being moulded by the same populations. All the forward-looking public issues that excite the loathing of the average politician, and make the heart of the Christian patriot beat faster, are issues of the thoughtful people who have been trained in the primitive American congress,—the common school.

It is not necessary, while claiming this of the common school of the fathers, to go off into any romantic or economical raptures over the facts; or, like some of our back-action reformers, declare that safety only lies in retreating upon the little red schoolhouse of fifty years ago. That school did the work; *not because it was better than its successor of to-day*, but for the same reason that the plank-road developed the West, — because it was the best thing on the ground at that time. Man always splices out the best thing possible under the circumstances, with an attachment of the whole upper side of human aspiration, hope, and prophecy. The reformer of transportation who should seriously

propose, before a committee of railroad men, to go back to the western plank-road of thirty years ago, would be the parallel, in travel, of the educator who has no better safeguards against the threatenings of the present than backing down hill into the slough where we all wallowed before the flood drove us into the Ark and up to the mountain-tops of a new civilization.

But the time has come when we must supplement this axiom with a new one, and say: "As, in the past, the common school saved the country, so, in the present, the teacher must save the common school." We solemnly affirm, as the result of a great deal of observation all over the country, that the present advanced system of free education in the United States depends, for the next quarter of a century, more upon the teacher than all other influences combined.

GOING TO COLLEGE.

If you are bound for a college, it will do you good to know, in advance, the best thing the best university can do for you. Probably any bright boy or girl, under private instruction, could obtain as much valuable information in two years as even Harvard or Vassar are able to lodge in the brain of their superior graduates in four. But the one thing no private schooling, no training in a little, select seminary can do, is the most valuable use of university life.

That college is probably your first introduction to the actual world. It represents to you that variety of talent, that diversity of character, that wide difference in ideas and ideals of life which supplies the condition of all self-knowledge in every successful man or woman. You will there be lifted out of the atmosphere of home, the town school, the companionships of youth, the peculiar notions that make the public opinion of your native place. In short, you will probably realize there, for the first time, that you are, one among a multitude of promising young people; are, at best, gifted at one angle of your nature; are destined to spend your life in conflict with others who excel you at every point save at this little angle of your real superiority.

So do not rebel at anything in college which takes down your conceit of yourself, or forces upon you the conviction that in the battle of life only the man who knows himself, and is willing to stand by himself and work out his own salvation, will succeed. Far better

than all the knowledge in all the libraries is the discovery that you are but one in a world of people, each with some good outfit of nature, each standing in proportion as he is faithful to that outfit. And if you can learn, in four years, to be grateful especially to all people who reveal you to yourself; who "polish off" your exaggerated opinion of your own merits, and compel you to walk through the strait-gate along the narrow way of your own proper ability, your college course will be justified and your graduation-diploma will be a roll of honor.

Our own most valuable experience in college life was not a college honor, but a dishonor. We entered, from a country academy, with very decisive ideas of our own concerning the value of certain lines of study in the curriculum. Of course we neglected the special study that seemed to us a waste of time for an aspiring youth. Retribution always waits upon this type of students. Ours, happily, came on an autumn day of the first term. Called to our feet to recite, we were hit just in the line of our neglect, and so unmercifully exposed by our tutor that, in despair, we flung down our book, rushed out of the class-room, and spent the day in tears and self-abasement under the old chestnut-trees of the neighboring grove. But that day's sorrow was the birthday of our mental life. That day, it came to us, as if just spoken out of heaven, that we were not quite competent to lay out a course of college study; that the beginning of all success is loyalty to duty; that instead of being the head, it was possible we were at the tail of our class; that there is but one honorable gate out of college into life, — the gate of hard work. The young tutor who thus became the "means of grace" to a boy he has long forgotton, is now a famous man in a great

city; but he will never do a better service to client or constituent than on that autumn day, when he revealed one "bumptious" freshman to himself, and set one more country youth on the highway to knowledge, reverence, and a consecrated life.

THE LABORER AND HER HIRE.

The rising tide of financial prosperity still halts far short of the school-house door. But no interest in the country so imperatively demands attention as the wages of the women who make the vast majority of teachers in our public schools. The earliest reduction in times of public calamity falls upon them. During the whole period of the late war, the wages of women-teachers, in one of the proudest little cities of Massachusetts, were ten per cent. below the pay of the better class of servants in city houses. To-day, outside a few favored localities, where the school-committee has made a successful fight against the champion "economist" of the place, the wages of women-teachers throughout New England are disgracefully small.

It is notorious that the better class of graduates of the three normal schools of the State of Maine cannot find remunerative employment at home, but are flooding the city schoolrooms of Massachusetts and the West in search of a fair year's wages for a good year's work. A superior young woman, who led her class in a Massachusetts normal school, writes us that she is trying to get to Germany for a year's study, with a companion-lady in the same town, on a salary of $450 a year, out of which she must live and lay up treasure, — probably in heaven. When she gets there, — to Germany, — will she write and tell us how she did it? Another fine young woman we found teaching and superintending the graded school of a historic village of 5,000 people, that has not a poverty-stricken house in its

boundaries, on a munificent allowance of $9.00 a week; paying the market-price for board in a well-to-do family; universally praised by all classes; but compelled to rely for everything, outside board and lodging, on less than one hundred dollars a year. The teachers of one of the most famous female academies of Massachusetts have lived, for years, on even shorter rations; their summer vacations provided for by the kindness of thoughtful friends. Indeed, it is a mystery to everybody outside the Yankee schoolma'am "ring," how an educated woman, a lady by culture, tastes, and associations, can turn around in the second-class cities of New England, on wages ranging from $350 to $550 a year. And the wonder deepens when we know, as any thoughtful school committee-man does know, that the majority of these faithful teachers are carrying burdens at home which divide their salary, and too often keep them at work in a leaden cloud of anxiety from year to year. In New England the masters take the lion's share of money and responsibility; but even the masters are not in the way of large investments in the new United States 4 per cents.

Outside of New England the opening is more favorable for the superior class of women-teachers, who are placed at the head of important graded schools in large towns, and city grammar schools, and sometimes electe supervisors of education for a county. But how the women-teachers of the city of Philadelphia manage, is a question that can, perhaps, be solved by its city council, that voted itself a $10,000 public banquet to Gen. Grant (who doesn't drink), and is piling up a city hall big enough for the capitol of the united nations of North America. From every quarter of the Middle and Western States comes up the story, told by the school

commissioners of the great wealthy counties of Western New York;—the people have everywhere been cutting down the wages of the school-mistress; driving away skilled teachers, and filling the schoolrooms with such women as will work for the pittance offered them by "retrenching" boards of trustees.

Now, we fully sympathize, on the one hand, with every intelligent popular protest against poor school-keeping; and, on the other, with the rising demand among thoughtful people for skilled labor in the school-room. A poor teacher should be paid to get out of the way. A "tolerably good teacher," like a tolerably honest man or a tolerably chaste woman, has a terrible aptitude at breaking down at the critical point where the dead strain comes in. But with what face can our enthusiastic school reformers approach the superior class of American women-teachers, the finest body of young women in Christendom, with the searching demand of the educational expert? They have already spent from fifteen to twenty years, since they were out of the cradle, in study, supported by their parents or friends. Their present work is so exhausting that it leaves little time for any sort of study, little time for anything save the everpresent "sewing," which is the demon of the American schoolmistress. Their vacations cannot safely be given to severe study, even in a "summer school" masquerading as a picnic. More than any other class of women, they are carrying burdens in the support of families or education of younger brothers and sisters. They cannot afford to stop for a year's vacation of rest and study. The expert shouts,—go up higher;—and a good many of them do "go up higher" every year,—to the blessed realm where the expert ceaseth to worry and the jaded schoolma'am is at rest.

There is one way out of this trial, proposed by the jolly priest who holds forth in the educational columns of the *Catholic World.* The system of American schooling we propose, says the *World,* in substance, does not crush the people with taxation. Our teachers are a "consecrated brotherhood and sisterhood;" un married, supported by the church, and live on love and not money. As the clerical head of a large parochial school in Massachusetts said to a school committee-man: "The sisters who teach my school live on what I give them. I have the power to take the very clothes from their back, if I will." There's cheapness for the daughters of America! Whether the noble army of American schoolmasters and mistresses will conclude to serve the American people in this particular way, remains to be seen.

"But the schools are already so expensive," groans Mr. John Kelley, of the New York city board of apportionment; and whips out his jack knife to cut away a round half-million from the estimates of the school board. But is there nothing else in New York expensive? How many city officials live on the wages of the New York superintendent of schools? How much money is yearly stolen, wasted, voted away to church corporations to cover even their stingy allowance to their own teachers in that city? How many millions have been fleeced from the people by great corporations, like the elevated railroad; and how many rings are advancing up the Hudson to capture the new legislature in the new $20,000,000 State House in Albany? How much money was spent on useless presents in New York during the past holidays? How much will be spent before Easter in the wild, reckless whirl of fashion, which is making New York the new Babylon of the

continent? What interest in that city, the most expensive upon earth in proportion to its numbers and wealth, can taunt the free school with expensiveness? Can the popular religion? Can the courts? Can the politics? Can the homes? Can the liquor-shops and the gambling-hells, and whole streets crowded with houses of infamy? Yet, "gentlemen of property and standing" flare up at a school estimate of less than $4,000,000 for 1,000,000 people, with thousands of children in the streets; and great metropolitan journals demand that the whole upper story of the free school shall be cut off to enable this poverty-stricken municipality to teach the Arabs of the streets the "three R's"! The only fit name for this style of economy is Barbarism, with a big B!

There is money enough in America to justify the American people in putting a skilled man or woman into every school-room of the land, and paying that teacher a generous salary for the most precious public service of the State. There is no need of retrenchment in any useful line of expenditure to compass this result. A retrenchment of ten per cent. on the sensuality, political corruption, and godless luxury of our people would re-construct every unfit school-house, and clothe every common-school teacher in the "purple and fine linen" of a comfortable sense of fair pay and fair play, and a cheerful outlook against the day of want. When will the American people comprehend this fact?

JOHN'S OBJECT-LESSON.

Our old college chum, John Tomkins, heard the discussion at the Massachusetts State Convention of Teachers, the other day, on object-teaching, and told us how he became a disciple of the system, forty years ago, before this new-fashioned name had been given to a very old-fashioned thing.

John had been to church and heard an eloquent sermon from the text, "He that soweth in tears shall reap in joy." Somehow the discourse made very little impression, and that of the sort that follows the declaration of a paradox. But, on Monday, John fell from the top rail of a fence in the cow-pasture, broke his leg, and was taken home, crying and writhing with pain, and set down on a chair to wait for the doctor. While he sat there, he told me, it came to him as if it had been written upon the wall in letters of fire, "*John, don't be a coward!*" The doctor came, and in the tedious and miserable old-fashioned country-doctor way, pulled and pinched and wrenched and worried himself into a great sweat setting the poor little fellow's broken leg. But he, the owner of the leg, sat there,—like Wellington at Waterloo,—pale and faint, but like a rock; making no noise, holding the quivering and throbbing leg firmly up to the old doctor's trembling hands. And as the trial went on, as he told me, he saw his father's eye kindle with a look of pride, and his mother turned her face to brush the tears from her kindling cheeks, and his two sisters nestled up to him, as if to say, "Here is the brother fit to be our hero"; and through the crack

of the kitchen-door another girl's face was peering in, with a look that would pay a grown man for losing both legs,—for losing everything but his heart out of his breast. And when he lay on his bed, week after week, while the broken leg was getting well, he noticed how everybody treated him with a sort of respect, as if he were a grown man; and when he went back to school, the teacher took his hand with a peculiar grip; and the whole world was different, after that day, from the world before the doctor came to set his broken leg.

John didn't understand it all then, but he now understands what it all meant: that the hardest path in this world, if followed resolutely to the end, will lead a boy or a man to all the splendid things of life, if he will walk in it as ordered by the good Father of all the boys and girls in the world.

HOME MISSIONS FOR THE SCHOOLS.

The most serious obstacle to the improvement of the public schools now is the ignorance of their organization and practical working by the people who pay for and depend upon them for the training of their children. Within the past twenty years the school-keeping of the country has lunged ahead in the same wholesale way as our new politics, journalism, and society. Great things have been attempted, and, considering the helter-skelter way in which the movement for the new education has been pushed, remarkable things have been accomplished. But it is fearful to think how small a number of people have been responsible for this mighty revolution in methods of instruction..

A little group of enlightened and resolute teachers, backed by a few broad-minded and courageous school committee-men, have planned the campaign, officered the army, captured city after city, forced improved education through the villages into the outlying hamlets, compelled private schools to reconstruct their programmes, and, generally, carried forward the cause of the children. The people followed, under the impulse of the great national reconstruction, and gave the school-men the means to get their system on the ground.

All this was suddenly reined in by the sharp bit of the financial panic. The champion economist in every town drove at the school appropriation as the biggest pile of public money in sight, and reveled in the joy of cutting down salaries, consolidating and reducing expenses in a field so promising. Such an opportunity

for protest against the whole movement would not be wasted by the crowd of chronic objectors, superseded teachers, and aggrieved parents, always ready for a crusade upon the schools. For the last three years the new system has been roughly assailed, thrown on its defence, and, in some cases, disorganized and beaten down. It is, however, a striking proof of the general wisdom of this movement that, on the whole, it can be said the American system of education has received no vital damage in any essential department from this assault along the whole line.

But now the one imperative need is a more intelligent understanding of that system, at least by the superior people of our community; the men who sit in legislatures and municipal boards, and are chosen to administer and nominally to establish the people's schools. Any school-man of experience is painfully aware of the amazing lack of information, even in cultivated quarters, on matters that should be familiar to the parent of every school-child. How many of the leading merchants, lawyers, physicians, and women of society, to say nothing of mechanics and laboring people, in our most cultured cities, could give an inquiring foreigner an intelligent account of the common schools? Such a condition of popular ignorance is a constant invitation to all enemies of the schools, educational humbugs and destructives, to make damaging charges by the wholesale and launch visionary theories. And it is amazing to see how many excellent people are deceived or confused by this outcry, and unwittingly brought into an attitude of opposition to a cause they have most deeply at heart.

It is gratifying to see that the press is recognizing this call for information, and, after a sort, moving to in-

form the people. Of course, a vast amount of this writing, even in the most pretentious quarters, has been wide of the mark; the vaporing of crude theorists or the reckless stirring-up of the sensational journalist who hits a head wherever he sees it. But one thing is gained,—the journals and magazines are opening their columns to the discussion of the new education.

Now is the time for our best teachers, our most effective superintendents, and our wisest school-men to claim their rightful place as writers and speakers to the people. If anybody knows what the new education is, certainly these men and women who have given it to the country are able to explain their own work.

It is remarkable how much can really be done by the humblest country school-mistress, who knows what she is about, to interest and instruct the people of her district in the new ways of education. It is not too much to say that an association, composed of the teachers of any country town, in a reasonable time, could wake up the community to an intense interest in their schools, and virtually overcome the opposition to progress. Our people learn fast in these revolutionary days, and nothing is so interesting to "all sorts and conditions of men" as their children. If the teachers through the rural districts still complain of a low state of public opinion in education, are they not themselves partially responsible for it?

We do not believe the corps of superior teachers in any of our cities realizes its power to vitalize public opinion in this direction. However faithful in the school-room, as long as they are out of sight, reticent, undemonstrative, off in corners meekly complaining over their wrongs, they will be largely at the mercy of their enemies. What could not be done by a body of

men and women so eminent, so accustomed to the pen, so near to parents as the superior teachers of any State, to clear up misunderstanding, explain methods, expose pretentious schemes of reform, and overthrow the scheming foes of the American school!

The best outfit for any teacher in this mission-work for the children is a good educational periodical; not skimmed in a reading-room, or read in the hasty way it must be by the members of a club; but taken, paid for, thoroughly read and digested, and bound up in the most valuable of all volumes for the teacher's reference. Many a school-mistress now anxious for her position, or groaning over a stingy salary, would have been far on the other side of Jordan, to-day, had she thoroughly read, applied, and communicated to her parishioners such a journal. In the searching times that are coming upon our teachers, only they who can thus "give a reason for the faith that is in them," and build up around themselves an intelligent constituency, can hope to survive. Teacher! begin the new year, 1880, by turning over a new leaf. Supply yourself with the best school journal and a library of education, and take the field in your own little kingdom as one of God's missionaries to the children; and great shall be your reward.

THE STUDENT'S SISTER.

The second-best man in our college-class had a sister. She must have been a little sister then, for her brother didn't talk about her in that mysterious way in which the fellows in college are wont to refer to big sisters who may be suspected of being candidates for post-graduate honors in connection with the superior men of the class. But he was evidently fond of the little girl at home, and wasn't ashamed to let his class-mates know it. He also had aspirations for the little sister. She came of good Yankee stock, and those were days when about the highest thing to which a Yankee girl could aspire (next to marrying a minister) was to become a schoolmistress in a first-class academy, if especially exclusive, in a "female academy" of the good, old-fashioned Congregational type.

The little sister, in time, grew up and became just that,—the mistress in a renowned "female academy." We kept track of her outs and ins for a few years, and, then, twenty more years, with a war inside them, rolled like a great sea between our new Western home and the dear, old "down East." Back again, seven years ago, we began our long tramp in behalf of the schools among the old towns of Massachusetts, fondly remembered as part of the far-off years before the flood. How strangely these boys and girls of thirty years ago look out upon you from eyes shadowed by grizzled eyebrows; through the mask of faces, written all over with the wondrous story of the last generation of our awful American life!

But, one morning, as we sat, at early breakfast-time, in the home of a solid farmer, among the foot-hills of the Berkshires, the bountiful table girdled by a ring of bright-eyed boys (their big sister away at the "female academy"), an old memory flashed out through the face and eyes of the mother of the household. What was it? Was she, too, one of the girls of old Deerfield Academy who have appeared on the scene at every point on two continents, visited by us, for the last thirty years? No, — not there; nowhere have we seen that face; but one like to it, as brother is likened to sister, when both are the scions of a famous old stock that scores its sign and seal on its every child to the last generation. Now, with the help of madam, it all comes out. She is the little sister of our second-best man at college, graduated from mistressship in the "female academy" to the place of wife and mother in the big farm-house, and joint-mistress of broad acres of pasture and fields, just where the lower Berkshires dip down to that paradise of meadow we call, in our poor speech, the valley of the Connecticut.

Why all this pother about the "higher education" of a generation ago, with a turn at schoolma'aming in a famous "female academy," to graduate a farmer's wife at the end,—not one of those charming young ladies from Boston that keep a summer hotel in a country palace on the fancy farm of their husband, who is burying his father's hundred thousands in a grand agricultural experiment,—but the *bona fide* article of a New England farmer's wife, up to her eyes in real work, every line in her face telling the story of the good fight that country life in New England must be to every woman who holds the reins of her own home?

There is no time, now, to discuss that question across

the table. The farm-wagon is up, and the biggest boy shouts from the driver's seat that the train waits for no man. But once off on our three-mile drive to the station, the problem of the "higher education," in the little sister's case, rapidly clears up. This pair of wide-awake boys are on their daily morning drive to the best school in Western Massachusetts. My lecture of the night before is handled by these youngsters in a way that puts the lecturer on his metal, and makes him not unwilling to alight in the midst of an elaborate attempt to explain a somewhat ticklish position under the second head. The "higher education," planted a generation ago amid the quiet valleys of old Hampshire County, in the quiet soul of the little Yankee sister, has taken root, blossomed through toilsome years, and borne this precious cluster of household fruit, this group of brave boys and gentle girls, up to anything likely to happen in this republic for a generation to come.

Because our country, from the woods of Aroostook to the gardens of Santa Barbara, is full of little sisters bound to get all the education going, do we all take heart and hope of the republic that is to be. The one sovereign American woman's right is to make herself a woman fit to go anywhere, at home or abroad, and everywhere glorify the name of an American womanhood, shaped according to the likeness of wisdom, beauty, and love. To such a generation of our sisters all good things will flow, all vital rights be granted; and from such shall proceed that blessed era of "peace on earth and good-will to men," which shall blend all our discords in the harmony of a union at one with itself and at one with mankind.

CAMILLA IN THE SCHOOL-ROOM.

Every schoolboy remembers the nimble-footed maiden, Camilla, who, according to Virgil, possessed the graceful and convenient gift of skimming over the surface of the fields without so much as bending the tips of the blades of grass, or rustling the pollen of the flowers. All ancient fables have their counterpart of fact in these new days, at least in the world of mind; and in more than one American school-room an American schoolmistress, twice as handsome and ten times as "smart" as Virgil's "girl of the period," is going through a series of mental gymnastics, every way as wonderful to the bewildered youngsters who are looking on.

We happened in, one day, upon a first-class primary school-room, in a city that justly makes great boast of its public schools. The room was everything that could be desired; and with its cheerful light, pure air, lovely grouping of simple ornaments, suitable pictures, school apparatus and furniture, was itself a capital training-school in that most important branch, the art of living and behaving in a good house. Every child in that room will be more determined to make a comfortable and pleasant home, and know better how to live in it, for his year's experience amid its pleasant surroundings.

There was no fault to be found with the course of study. The most inveterate grumbler against "cramming" would have seen how the children of to-day learn half-a-dozen things in half the time the child in the old district-school "got the hang" of the alphabet. The

discipline was a perfect vindication of all the money spent on music, gymnastics, and drawing in that school-room. And there, as in so many modern school-houses, Christ's blessed law of love had "free course, run, and was glorified."

What then was the matter with that school? Just what is the matter with a good many of our primary schools, which, missing one thing, miss the secret of success. To a practiced eye, a five minutes' inspection revealed "a failure to connect," all round the room; a sense of a general disjointing of minds; a great breeze of electric enthusiasm covering a painful lack of knowledge of what the enthusiasm was about; a sort of dazed and bewildered condition of all the faculties, reminding one of the pious old lady from the country, sitting on the church-steps, in the main street of the local metropolis, as the mighty Fourth-of-July procession swept by, crying out, "Oh, if this world is so beautiful, what will it be in the world to come!" All this, and a good deal that can only be felt, gave us a growing sense of uneasiness as we sat on the platform.

There was great danger that we should overlook this, and mistake the splendid girl-teacher, fresh from the best normal training, for the school. For she filled the room with that indescribable charm of enthusiastic activity, which we see nowhere outside our best modern primary schools; positively a new revelation of the capacity of young womanhood, and largely accounting for the sudden arrest in the development of so many of these lovely girl-teachers, by the appearance on the scene of another member of the ancient group of divinities. There was no lack of love for the little ones in this particular schoolmistress. Her daily presence must have been a brighter light than the common sunshine

to every little one of her flock. Of course she taught them religion in its essence,—"good morals and gentle manners,"—being herself the incarnation of the "law of kindness." She also waked up the mind of the dullest boy on the back seat, and broke up, every five minutes, the desperate flirtation of a little golden-haired coquette with two susceptible youngsters in velvet jackets and red stockings on either side. Each of her fifty scholars who lives twenty years will, sooner or later, feel that mental awakening, like the coming in of a high tide upon a sluggish creek, flooding all the shores and washing a whole raft of stranded lumber far out to sea in its retreat. The mistress did everything save one, and that one is the bolt that clenches our whole fabric of school-work and approves it to a practical man.

She didn't *teach the things set down in her course of study*. At the end of a term of that exciting and charming life in her school-room, those children will not be able to read, spell, write, use simple numbers, speak with accuracy, sing and draw with intelligence. They will go up to the next grade in the state of spiritual exhilaration and mental uncertainty voiced by the young lady at the Concord School of Philosophy, last summer, —"Oh, I don't understand it very well; but it's perfectly magnificent!" And just this lack of a hard-pan of accurate knowledge of the elements, unless supplied within a year or two, will leave those children all afloat, every year more confused and discouraged, till half of them will fall out of school in sheer hopelessness, and the rest will flounder through grammar school, high school, college; through life outside the school, until some good providence takes them back to some mother's knee and begins again that most painful of all work,—

the work of learning the lesson of a child after one has become a woman or a man.

It was the old fable of Camilla repeated in the modern school-room. That charming young schoolmistress was skimming over the tops of the grass-blades and the flowers, propelled by an uncontrollable enthusiasm, kindled by the very sight of her children, fed by the highest motives, and nursed as tenderly as a mother's love for her new baby. But one thing she had not learned, — that strange conservatism and slowness of pace by which a little child first essays to walk the path of *knowledge*. She was all the time mistaking the enthusiasm of the children over herself for their understanding of what she was trying to teach. She did not quite touch the mind of the average pupil in her room, though perhaps half-a-dozen of the fifty did follow her, did most of the work, and will come out a brilliant show-group on examination-day. All this she will learn, by-and-by, and five years hence, if she remains a primary school-teacher, will somewhat veil her perilous enthusiasm and walk slowly and softly by the toddling intellect of the least of her little ones, leaving the Camilla business to the half-dozen preternatural youngsters, who will fancy they are teaching the mistress a hundred things, while she is patiently and modestly laying that sure foundation of mental accuracy without which the loftiest genius is only one more splendid featherhead.

Teachers of the little children, remember that for the next thirty years this country of ours will have use for a prodigious amount of clear, accurate thought in a vast number of "level heads," to save it from worse things than have yet come upon us. Be as charming, as enthusiastic, as like Virgil's girl of the mythological period as you will, everywhere; but remember that

little children walk very slow in the beginning of their mortal life. School yourself to walk softly; to think and feel and live in a child's way. For the Great Master says: "Verily I say unto you, unless ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven."

A CHILD'S LIBRARY.

One of the most useful of recent new departures in education is the practical union of the public library and the public school in the teaching of English literature. In many of our cities and villages the higher grades of the schools are supplied with copies the English classics for general reading; lists of suitable books for young people are distributed, and the teachers coöperate in many admirable ways.

But, after all, there is a point not yet touched even by this excellent arrangement. The bent of reading is often taken before the child reaches the school grade for which these arrangements are made. A great public library to a ten-year-old boy is a good deal like the starry firmament; very magnificent to look up to, but not a very familiar place to abide in. Besides, the books do not belong to him and must be hastily read, often at times when reading is not a pleasure. Our own experience has convinced us that, for the average child, the element of possession of a book is of great importance. The borrowed book, however attractive, is never read with the loving enthusiasm with which the child devours the volume that is his own. Try the experiment of loaning to your pupil Scott's *Lady of the Lake, Robinson Crusoe, The Arabian Nights.* Give to another pupil the same book as his own property. In nine cases out of ten, the borrowed book will be read on the gallop, hastily taken in and forgotten. The book owned by the child will be read leisurely, returned to, and lingered over with loving fondness; taken out under the

grees in summer; taken down from the shelf for consultation; really assimilated into the mental and moral being. It is the most common-place truism, that the value of reading does not depend half as much upon the quantity gone over as the quality of the book and the deliberate and thoughtful method of using it.

Now the natural way to interest a child in reading is to give it a book, suitable to its years and mental condition, and leave it to its own way of appropriating its contents. Every child, now-a-days, even the poorest in the public schools, should be encouraged to found a library. This is a large phrase, but like many another great thing, may grow up from very small beginnings. The corner-stone of the child's library should be his first text-book in school, or the first book given him before school years. Encourage your pupil to gather up every book that belongs to him, not omitting the least picture-book, or even pictured alphabet, game, or Christmas-card. Save everything. Keep every text-book. File every child's paper or magazine. In a little time the family and friends will find out what John or Julia is about, and presents of good books will come in apace. The boy who sees a growing book-shelf every morning, when he gets out of bed, will have a constant reminder to save his pennies to buy some favorite book, rather than spoil his stomach with candy or buy a ticket to the "Black Crook." Now-a-days, when readable editions of the English classics can be bought for fifty cents a volume, almost every child is able to buy a few good books every year. It is surprising how soon such a library assumes respectable dimensions, and amazing how many beautiful books and valuable magazines are destroyed by children, now-a-days, or want of some definite plan of keeping them together.

And anybody who knows child-nature can understand how much more thoroughly the books of that home-library will be read than the volumes borrowed from any source.

And what a precious possession is such a library, however small, to every youth. Every passing year is chronicled with some new and valuable addition to the growing bookcase. And now the mysterious law of association comes in, and every volume is transmuted by the imagination into a sacred memorial of the past. That little pictured alphabet brings back the face of the mother, the admiring group, the very day and hour of the wonderful gift. Here is a volume with the autograph of the schoolmate who has passed on to the great university in the heavens. This faded text-book, with its torn leaves, recalls the tussle with a hard lesson which gave you the first sense of conscious mental power. This poem was "the gate called beautiful" through which you entered the enchanted realm of Longfellow or Wordsworth, or began to climb the Alpine steeps of Milton, or looked off upon the wonderland of Shakespeare. This is the novel your sister read aloud when you were getting up from the scarlet-fever, and this is the very chapter that set you laughing till mother came in, suppressed the book, and put you off to bed, "weak as a rat." And here, as you live, is the stain of a flood of tears, rained down on a page that stormed your heart, twenty years ago, and made you realize that childhood had passed and your womanhood had come.

Teachers and parents, set your children to this good work of founding a child's library, and keep them at it till they need no pushing from you. And it may turn out that a few shelves of good books will educate your child more than all the schools and universities.

THE PEOPLE AND THE SCHOOLS.

The greatest need, just now, of our American system of free education for the whole people is that the whole people should know just what it is; understand what it proposes to do; what it is now doing; what it can be made to do; at least as well as they understand their ordinary affairs of business and government. We are no such visionary as to suppose that even the most intelligent or best educated class of our people are to become experts in school-keeping. As society develops, under the formative power of science, freedom, and Christian civilization, all difficult tasks in professional and public, as well as industrial life, must be handed over to experts, trained in the best methods of doing important things. But the one question below the question of skilled labor, everywhere in this republic, is, Shall the people be governed by rings of infallible and despotic experts, or shall the experts be elected, surrounded, supported, and in the last result, governed by an intelligent, virtuous, free people, who propose, from this day on, to sit down under no emperor, called by whatever name?

There is a great deal of valuable talk in certain cultivated quarters, about the dire necessity that the people's work should be done by the most skillful men. All right; polish up your experts, in all corners of American life; there is all the distance between the top of the Himalayas and the "loftiest star of unascended heaven" for great men to grow in. But, meanwhile

let the word be passed round that the sovereign people of the United States of America don't intend to resign one jot or tittle of the sovereignty won through the toil and tears and blood of two hundred and fifty years, to anybody. And the people know just what they mean when they say this. They know that if they want the best work done by the skilled men who can best do it, in the mill or in the schoolhouse, they must school themselves to know good work when they see it; to discriminate a real expert from a pedant, a tyrant, or a humbug of any sort. And in this vexed matter of school-keeping, over which the experts are just now making such a pother, — some of them blandly proposing that the people shall quietly abdicate and put the whole business of caring for that end of the Republic into the hands of commissioners appointed for life, — the people propose to have the experts, have the best teaching, have the best schools, but in the American way; by making themselves intelligent and independent and right-minded enough to appreciate, demand, have, pay for and defend the best education against all the world.

It is not so strange that the people of that part of the United States which is just now responsible for advanced republican institutions, are a little behind in the discussion of this mighty theme of the fit education of their children. This portion of the American people, within the past twenty years, has done the biggest stroke of work ever done on this planet in the line of public affairs. It has raised, fought, and disbanded an army of 1,000,000 men; put down a rebellion that involved a country twice as large as Europe west of the Russian line; reconstructed a conquered people up to the forms of constitutional government; licked into

shape, funded, and begun to pay a prodigious national debt, and worked its way out of a national industrial panic into the opening year of a marvelous national prosperity. And all the time this portion of our people has been doing many good things for its own towns and cities, and private affairs at home. Within the past twenty years the oldest portions of the Republic, old Massachusetts, old Rhode Island, old Connecticut, have "gone up," and in their place are now three commonwealths, as thoroughly new and progressive as California, Kansas, and Colorado.

Now while the leading people of the North have been doing all these things, the superior teachers and the schoolmen and women have been at work, as no such body of people ever worked in this world, to reconstruct the American system of education, from the primary school to the University, and make it a fit training-school for the American citizenship, American manhood and womanhood, on which the republic absolutely depends. The mass of our best-informed and most active people, even the men who have made the laws, that have set this new educational machine in motion, have not, themselves, always or often known just what they were at. They have trusted in this, as in other affairs, to those who were supposed best to know. The mass of the people have known one thing well, — that they were determined, first and last, to have the best possible education for their children, at as little expense as possible, but to have it. Now that this system is on the ground from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon, the people are waking up to ask what it is they have been doing; and naturally enough, in this general awaking, there is a great shout of opposition, criticism, denunciation, filling the air, especially concerning the American

system of free schools. More than one legislature of a Northern State of this Union, within the last few years, has been beset by an excited lobby demanding such changes in our system of free public instruction as would scuttle the free school and let us all down to the educational mud-bottom of the Europe of a generation ago.

Now, the thing to be done, as we see it, is for the people, especially the people who have children to be educated, to reply to all this clamor,—Hold on; not so fast! We have been at work, here in these Northern States of America, since the landing of the Pilgrims, to build up a system of free education for the people. We have such a system now on the ground. It does the work, certainly, after a fashion. Some of the work it does very well. Some of it can be improved. There may be some things it has not yet attempted to do which can now be attempted. It may be one-sided, pedantic, bookish, as you say; if so, it can be reconstructed. But, at present, our children are at school, and we don't propose to burn down the schoolhouse to drive out a few rats that infest it, or take down the whole side of a college to let one new expert go in. Give us time. We have a little more leisure now than during the twenty years past, to look this thing over; to find out what the teachers and the schoolmen propose to do for us; what we now have on the ground; what is likely to be the outcome of the best things now going on among the children. As fast as these great changes you propose appear to us practicable, and suitable to the condition of a free people, we shall find it out and help you to alter, amend, reconstruct, preserve or destroy, as may be the call of the hour.

A SMATTERING OF THINGS.

There is a great deal of rather loose talk, to the effect that our public-school system is rearing up a generation of smatterers and superficialists. The contrast is often made between what is called the thorough system of years ago, when the "three R's" were taught "thoroughly," and the present, when even the primary course of study in graded schools groans with half-a-dozen "ologies," each of which might knock the breath out of the body of a scientific professor. A good many experts in science and literature are loudly protesting that the new education is a waste of power, diffusing the activity of the school over a vague realm of multifarious investigation, but leaving the children, on examination-day, with only a "smattering of things."

Now, all poor teaching and dead-alive studying in the school-room is fair game for anybody. A good deal of that funny sort of "oral instruction" that the New Bedford school authorities mistook for the "new methods" is so absurd that the wonder is that so shrewd a man as Superintendent Harrington ever tried it at all. Yet in numbers of schools, just this mistake is being made, and many a teacher is pulverizing her brains in the invention of blackboard school-books, and pouring a thin mixture of science and water over the heads of a crowd of jolly urchins, who lean back with unmitigated joy to see how the mistress does it. By all means let Superintendent Harrington warn till that sham no longer vexes the people and demoralizes the children.

But the new education, as expounded by Dickinson,

and operated by Calkins, Sheldon, and Rickoff, and the great school-men and women of the West, is another thing. This means the most serious and sacred dealing with the little child, as a being of divine origin and immortal destiny, full of glorious faculties, set down for a while in this corner of the universe, as in a primary school, to learn the use of its powers, gain an outlook through the main vistas of knowledge and life, and get well on its feet to run the race appointed for every son or daughter of God. Of course, this radical idea of education underlies all fruitful teaching and discipline in church and home, and all truly republican government, no less than instruction in schools. The one persistent method of education for despotism in church or state is to assume the natural incompetency of the child, and mould it by a system of cram in every region of its life, superintended by a despotic pedagogue, called indifferently parent, king, priest, or schoolmaster. This is the kind of instruction that is fatal to all real education, because it leaves the soul of the pupil crushed and dwarfed and childish, hardly capable of stowing away the material that is flung upon it by the teacher. The whole operation reminds one of a small boy, with a pitchfork planted in the center of a great hay-mow, trying to catch the avalanche from the man who unloads the contents of the great wagon in the air above his head. The wide-awake boy will probably succeed in "mowing away" the fragrant fodder with only an occasional knock down; but the average boy will be buried out of sight before the wagon is half emptied. Thus, in thousands of great schools in the past, dominated by mighty old pedagogues, did multitudes of children fight for dear life. The few of original genius and unusual ability came forth rejoicing. But, alas, for the sprained limbs, broken backs, and caved-in heads of the great "common

herd," for whom this kind of thoroughness was quite too much! No wonder that the whole crowd of pedagogues of this type is not only opposed to the new methods, but skeptical of even the capacity of the average child for what it calls education. Only a born intellectual athlete can face that storm of "thorough teaching" and live.

But this gospel according to cram is "thorough" only in the sense that it aims to fill the mind of the pupil with a complete catalogue of the facts belonging to any science. But, inasmuch as it neglects the proper discipline of the powers by which alone everlasting ideas, principles, and laws can be discovered and applied in dealing with these facts and living a man's true life in God's universe, this system is the very essence of superficiality. The pupil is left the most hopeless smatterer in the independent use of his powers and the vital apprehension of knowledge, and there is imminent danger that the more he knows the greater fool he will become. This fact explains the wretched bungling always made of public affairs by the "cultivated classes," when cultivated by the method of despotism. The rule of an aristocracy of pedants and priests is, of all governments, the most intolerable, and provocative of revolution. The people of the United States are right in declining to intrust great public interests to a "cultivated class," or to experts of any kind trained in this way. The all outdoors, rough-and-tumble school of frontier life, through which Washington and Lincoln grew up to commanding power, has a thousand-fold its right to be called "scientific education," because it is a real training of all the human faculties, and the placing the man himself on his own feet, with the ability to know, act, and worship according to the opportunities and demands of his providential career.

A child in a good graded school is not made a smatterer by language-lessons that enable it to read, write, and express its thoughts in natural and characteristic style. Its feet are truly planted on the high road both to literature and philology; and the same natural use of its faculties that has brought it thus far will make it a Longfellow or a Max Müller if the natural aptitude be there. It is not a smattering of botany to require a little boy to bring to the class a wayside flower and daily test its powers of observation upon it; learning enough in three months to open its eyes forever to the gospel of the flowers, the meadow, and the forest. Just by doing this all its life, with the aid of a good manual, will it become the sort of botanist so eloquently described in one of the essays of Christopher North. So with every topic that figures in the new course of study for the primary, district, or grammar school. The men and women who have formulated that course of study have not the slightest idea of turning out a generation of experts. Their primary object is to awaken, for life, that love of truth and thirst for knowledge, and conscientious devotion to work, which is the great moral steam-engine that moves all real education; next, to develop the powers by actual contact with things, and thoughts, under the lead of a vital teacher; and, finally, to open vistas through several great realms of knowledge and life along which the child may walk in its future, according to its taste and opportunity. Of course if this work is not thoroughly done, there is a deplorable collapse, and the new school becomes, in its way, as useless as the old. But, if rightly worked by a competent teacher, the new method is the very soul of thoroughness, *sending out into the world a thorough girl or boy*, without which all things in earth and heaven are at odds through time and eternity.

SOME GROUNDS FOR THE SUPPORT OF HIGHER EDUCATION BY THE STATE.

It cannot fail to strike the historical student that every civilized nation in the world, from the beginning of time, has provided, to a greater or less extent, for the education of a superior class in superior schools, at public expense; the only difference between the nations having been in their disposition to extend the public aid to the elementary education of the whole people. But, on the question of the public support of the superior education, the civilized people, ancient and modern, are unanimous.

A moment's thought reveals the entire reasonableness of this universal habit of all human governments. For, while it may be questioned whether the welfare of the State requires the enlightenment of the entire body of its people, nobody but a madman can believe a nation can endure without a strong body of superior people to shoulder the mighty responsibilities and perform the crushing labors of the upper region of its life. A people, called by any political name, who are all sunk to the low level of knowledge and reflection, in which the mass of mankind is so prone to linger, would be a national madhouse before sunset of any day. A people of this sort, with a small class of powerful and trained men at the top of society, becomes what the majority of nations have always been. Only when the gap between the unintelligent or partially-educated masses and the highest class is bridged by a strong body of well-informed and well-trained men and women, does the State move on in the happy mean of constitutional

government, well balanced by freedom and law. Sir Lyon Playfair says the curse of the Irish people, to-day, is the absence of such a class. The national and church schools have educated the mass just up in range of the agitating press and the insane leaders who have always played the demagogue at that unhappy people's expense; while the solid body of citizens, trained by a good system of secondary education, is wanting to mediate between the extremes of the State.

1. It is of the highest interest to every State that its professional classes should not be of that narrow, untrained sort, which is always found when uneducated youth rush upon the study and practice of the Law, Medicine, Divinity, and Instruction. There is no greater blessing to a country than a class of superior lawyers, doctors, ministers, teachers, and journalists; and no greater blight upon public advancement than pretentious, ignorant bunglers in these posts of honor. To insure this, every Christian State has thought it wise to offer its aid,—if not for the means of professional training, at least for that general superior culture of the whole man which makes the chief difference between those who assume the honors and duties of professional life.

2. It is especially important that a republican State should have, at call, a class of competent teachers for the common schools, in which all children may be trained for common citizenship. Without such a class there can be no security that the common school is a blessing. And without a care over the education and training of these teachers, the State can never be certain that its purpose in establishing these schools will not be baffled by obstinacy and ignorance, by sectarian jealousy,—especially by the enemies of republican in-

stitutions, who always drive at the children in a free State to pervert them from the way of liberty and light. So every State in general, and every republican Commonwealth in particular, has found it necessary to establish, support, and supervise a system of superior education to train superior youth for the sacred office of instructor in its common schools.

3. A republic, especially, needs a strong and numerous body of well-informed and reliable men and women, who shall stand in all social and public affairs between the great multitudes at the bottom and the few ambitious, powerful and magnetic men who always seek to rule the Commonwealth. A State without such a class speedily comes to an end of republicanism and closes up into a despotism. Now, this middle class, which is the very soul of a free State, can only be developed from the masses; and only where there is a public provision for the superior education of all who have the pith and persistence to take it, has it ever been found. Why cannot New England be dominated, like Ireland or Spain, by a succession of brilliant demagogues, each good for a revolution? Because New England, in a larger degree than any other group of States, has made that public provision for the training of the superior middle class of society, which is the keystone of the arch in a republic.

4. And even greater is the need, in a republican State, that there should be a numerous body of well-educated and well-trained women. It is the commonplace of every debating society, that the mothers rule the nation. The mother who gives birth to, cherishes and rears the boy, teaches him to talk, to use his faculties, to think, worship, act in practical affairs, and, generally, is nearest him till he is ten years old, is a

power in the State that no other person can possibly become. Now, everybody knows that a nation full of ignorant, vulgar, untrained women must remain a nation of subjects to some imperial or ecclesiastical power. And everybody may know, who will study history with open eyes, that a nation whose women are educated by an infallible priesthood becomes a nation rent with the desperate struggle between free thought and a church that never changes in its attitude to mankind. The most powerful, though, perhaps, the least noticeable result of our American system of free secondary education, is the constant elevation from the masses of a growing class of well-trained, thoughtful, patriotic Christian women, who prevent more evil in the republic than all the statesmen, and set in motion so many of the ideas and ideals that shape the policy of Senates and Presidents.

The assertion that this work of the secondary and higher education, or the greater part of it, can be left to private ambition and enterprise, runs against all the experience of mankind. Private ambition and extraordinary genius or energy may impel a few to climb the steep and toilsome path that even a good secondary training is to every youth. But all experience in human affairs demonstrates that where the State itself does not offer a constant invitation and stimulant by supplying, in whole or in part, the expense of such an education, its professional class, politicians, teachers, and mothers will fail of their fit culture, and the nation slide down on an ever-descending path to disorder and despotism. All States become powerful and famous in proportion as it is easy for the children of the whole people to climb the steep and rugged way of the superior training that lifts a man above his fellows.

THE COMMON SCHOOLS & THEIR RIDERS.

The great merit of the common schools is their commonness. They deal with that primal development of mind, manners, and morals, which is the universal need of a free State. They impart that useful knowledge without which no American woman is fit to be married, much less to be an "old maid;" and no man is fit to vote. An Astor or Stewart, without the knowledge and discipline imparted by these schools, would be a public pest in proportion to the size of his fortune. A hod-carrier, ignorant and untrained in the common American education, inevitably falls into the hands of his demagogue, who cheats or bullies him out of his manhood. Even the education and discipline given by the free high school, apart from the small number of pupils fitted for college, is as essentially common as in the simplest primary. It is not a special training, but a continuation of that common discipline which qualifies for the intelligent conduct of ordinary American life, and lays the groundwork of the superior professional character. Only when we come to the normal school, and the professional departments of a few State universities, chiefly dependent on national endowments of land, do we really touch upon the uncommon element in the people's school.

The most subtle danger that threatens the common school, is always the presistent effort of a crowd of uneasy and one-sided people to switch it off the central track and run it as an uncommon school. Foremost

among these reformers is always a considerable body of the teachers.

It has often been said that our estimate of the value of any department of knowledge is generally in proportion to our own proficiency; and unusual acquirements are apt to breed an exaggerated sense of their own value. Dip in anywhere, from Maine to California, and you are apt to come upon an accomplished teacher in some of the upper reaches of the schools who is bringing to bear the whole power of a vigorous personality to making a specialty the distinction of the school. Many of our Western schools have been ridden nigh to death by the infuriate methematician, who has so hedged in the path of promotion with difficulties that thousands of girls have been frightened away from the high schools, and the common-sense, practical use of figures has been greatly hindered. There are schools in which the steam is turned on chiefly in the direction of hand-writing, slate-ruling, and drawing; a sort of "making clean the outside of the cup and platter," while the inside is filled with a mush of ignorance. Just now the study of German is the "old man of the sea" that rides the schools of Western cities, with grievous injustice to all who will not surrender to the cosmopolitan course of study. There are scores of teachers in New England who are trying to flood the high schools with a thin dilution of "English literature"; while the studies that wake up the waiting manhood and womanhood of pupils, from sixteen to twenty, are given the go-by.

A superficial sort of "object lessons" has ridden many a crowd of children out to pasture and left them bewildered in the ten-acre-lot of miscellaneous and undigested information. We have seen schools where the

rider was a certain airy liveliness in the children, as if keeping infants on their spiritual tiptoes were education. And so on to the end of the chapter. It is "easy as preaching" for an enthusiastic, one-sided teacher to capture her school and turn the great current of its life in the direction where she has found her most delightful culture. A despotic and powerful master can wheel about a corps of subordinates and a thousand children by his own scheme of educational evolution, till they almost appear like a thousand chips maneuvering about one obstinate block.

Here is the call for a broad supervision of schools, by educators qualified through a generous culture and a sterling patriotic common-sense and sympathy with the masses, to keep the schools on the common track; restrain the enthusiasm of narrow specialists and aid the teachers in the difficult task of subordinating their personal tastes to the general good.

Great pains must be taken in the graded schools of cities to hold the teachers of music, drawing, gymnastics, sewing, firmly to their proper work. Of course, it is a trial to the experts who superintend these specialties to stop any where this side of thorough artistic training. But there can be found a way to use these attractive studies for the common purposes of American life. It is doubtless best to place all studies, in primary and lower grammar schools, in charge of the teacher of the room; reserving the time of the expert for the training of these teachers and a general oversight of the superior grades.

A new rider of portentous aspect is the craze, in certain quarters, for what is called industrial education in the common schools. Assuming that the mechanic arts and the use of tools is identical with industry,

it would make every school-room a sort of workshop. Even in our greatest manufacturing State, this rider would compel more than half the pupils, and those the children of the people most heavily taxed, to divert a good portion of their time from the common education to which they are entitled, in order to further the special training of the children of the mechanics and operatives. Of course, the discipline of the hand is valuable to all; but some good things must be left to be taught at home or by special private instruction. And gratifying as certain results in this direction may be to this class of school reformers, we believe the common-sense of the American people will hold the schools firmly to that commonness which is their only valid claim upon the support of the State.

We are now threatened with a serious revolt of all the children of one church from the common schools, because they will not accept the rider of an infallible scheme of moral and religious training. But if every person claimed the right to ride the common pony round the school-house ring, at the same time, we should have the old circus problem revived of a dozen small boys jointly and severally "bounced" over the head and the tail by the capers of the lively little beast. If our Archbishop has not found out that there is one morality common to Catholic, Protestant, Independent, and Jew, in Christian America, he fails of infallible wisdom to that extent. The people, in the long run, can be trusted to preserve this great, common realm of character-training for their schools, and vigorously keep the uncommon things of the ecclesiastics in the infinite range of operation outside.

We have no time now to speak of the new doctor who wants to ride his great physiological horse up the school-

house steps; the enterprising dentist who gnashes his teeth with rage because he cannot examine the mouth of every school-child; the elocutionist that burns to shriek "Maud Müller" through every school-room; the temperance agent who only asks the privilege to make a stump speech on the play-ground; the whole crowd of showmen, book agents, missionaries, etc., who drive at the schools with a pertinacity only known to the harassed school committee. Concerning all these riders, within and without, the one thing to be said, all the time, to the people who support the common school, is the pathetic negative of Mr. Weller, Sen.,—"*Samivel —don't.*"

SPEAKERS AND HEARERS IN SCHOOL CONVENTIONS.

The common-school institute has already been remodeled, and, in comparison with its elder brother, the institute of a dozen years ago, may be called a labor-saving machine. It is difficult to see (Gail Hamilton to the contrary, notwithstanding) how a better use could be made of two days and three evenings, with a hundred country teachers, than by Secretary Dickinson and his corps of experts in the recent institutes of Massachusetts. We hear famous things of some of the great meetings for the instruction of teachers, in New York and the Northwest. Indeed, the institute, in some of these States, is a veritable normal school on wheels,—one of those happy American combinations in education which strike dumb with astonishment our methodical school brethren from over the sea. We were once assigned, as a member of the Cincinnati School Board, by its genial superintendent, Dr. John Hancock, to the somewhat ticklish duty of piloting an English nobleman through the wonders of the "Paris of America." Our offer of service was met by the eager reply, "*Show us your short cuts.* I hear that in Cincinnati you change a live hog to a barrel of pork in two minutes, and teach little German children to speak good English in six weeks." All the outlying glories of the Queen City were wasted upon our earl on his travels in pursuit of "short cuts."

We are afraid our "noble lord" would fight shy of the average school convention, East and West. It

really seems as if this were about the last end of American school-life to be reconstructed in the interest of brevity, point, and general efficiency. The season of these pleasant gatherings, — county, State, national, — is upon us. With the most vivid recollections of numberless delightful "seasons" in the good company that swarms at these mighty assemblages, we yet venture to suggest that the "new education" requires some modification in the ordinary way of their management.

First: Let it be understood that a school convention, in distinction from an institute, is *an assembly of teachers and friends of education for general inspiration in educational work, and social communion.* It is absolutely impossible to hold a body so restless as one of these great audiences to any connected work of pedagogic instruction, or even to a profound and sustained dissertation on any topic of radical interest. Joseph Cook says, "An audience of teachers is the most select audience in America." But even a body as select as the five hundred superior men and women who crowd the biggest church in a Yankee village, at the county convention, is a great deal more interested, each in taking the measure of her fellow-man or woman, than in listening to any human voice. But, strange to say, we make no real provision to satisfy the social craving of such a body for more intimate acquaintance. We have not forgotten how, as a boy, we used to lie at full length, head propped on elbow, in the great square pew at the northwest summit of the gallery in the mighty old village church, all through sermon-time, looking straight down into the faces of the "treble" and "counter," and wonder if we should ever be accounted worthy to speak to this brace of divinities who condescended to "praise God in singing" at the head of the choir. Our observa-

tions from the platform confirm the suspicion that the average convention audience has far more interest in pedagogy incarnate in Hagar, Parker, or the scores of their bright-eyed disciples, or, even, the good old lady schoolma'am who, at seventy, still comes up to the feast as frisky as the last graduate of Oswego, than in a philosophical analysis of the question, "How much does a five-year-old child know?"

Now, the first condition of a teachers' convention is to get these eager hundreds of good people really together. The most indifferent country girl school-mistress can get from her JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, PRIMARY TEACHER, or any of a dozen excellent books on pedagogy, as much as anybody really knows about that mystery of the ages,—the soul of a little child. What she, alike with the wisest school-man wants, is *real contact with somebody who has actually taught and trained boys and girls with success.* A chat of five minutes in a corner, reënforced by the magic of a sympathetic voice and a beaming face, will open for him or her a prospect that will reconstruct the whole landscape of the coming school term. Nowhere in the world do good people make love so fast, or strike such lasting impressions into the very depths of each other's souls as when a crowd of teachers comes up from the toils and tears and mighty strivings of five hundred school-rooms, each calling out from the deeps to the neighbor, "What shall I do to be saved?" To compel such an assembly to sit, hour after hour, listening to a series of essays upon the topics that may be selected by a committee of experts, is the last device of pedantry. These men and women want each other, at that particular time, more than all things else; and how to get the most of each other, in four sessions, is the problem yet unsolved in the school convention.

But one thing is evident: One whole session of even a one-day's convention should be given to letting loose these hungry and thirsty souls among each other. Why not, in the afternoon, throw open the largest vacant assembly-room in the village, and give your crowd the opportunity to "have free course, run, and be glorified" for three golden hours? Then bring out your singers and your readers for an occasional relief to the music of tongues. Bring flowers, and whatever the whole-hearted hospitality of the village may offer. That session will be remembered when "new methods" have evaporated and experts are dust.

Second: Let the program for the working sessions be given to work. Observe the simplest rule of good school-keeping;—*to begin on the moment and stop at the end.* Your assembly of teachers and friends wants two things: first, a real discussion of the most interesting educational topic going, in the region covered by the convention; second, to see as many of the foremost teachers of the district as can be seen, and hear a few minutes', not of theory but of *experience-talk*, from each on that point. Introduce the subject by a concise paper, the length of a good sermon, from a speaker of undoubted ability to reach "the most select audience in America." Then call up, for the remainder of the three hours' session, a score of the leading teachers, warned beforehand, to give in a talk, not exceeding ten minutes, as much of what they *actually "know"* on this theme as may be. Hold every speaker to time, and let motion be the law of the session. It may be desirable to leave half an hour open to volunteer speeches, of five minutes each, at the close of the program.

Third: The evening of the convention should be utilized for the waking-up of the whole people, — not

less important now than the training of teachers. An introductory lecture, of moderate length, followed by a series of talks from eminent speakers, of different professions, will make an impression that no political meeting can hope to rival. There is no public listening, now-a-days, more eager and critical than by the crowded audience that invariably comes out to hear, when it is assured of common-sense, earnestness, and eloquence on the platform of the school-convention. A day thus begun by the flitting of the teachers from half a hundred towns; revolving through sessions each distinct in method, all united in the idea; closed by a night of such hospitality as our people are glad to extend, will be an era in the life of many a teacher, and never forgotten by anybody.

TOO THIN.

There seems to be a theory of education on its travels, up and down the country, that regards the teacher as a skilled workman, trained to impart certain items of elementary knowledge, develop a certain order of "intellectual" faculties, and, in due time, bring forth a youth or maiden well instructed in the special duties of its special position in life, with the happy faculty of being content therewith. The advocates of this gospel of common-school education reduced to its lowest terms, are very positive in regard to the importance of keeping within the rigid limit of a fit education for the masses. On no account must we tread on the toes of the Family, which has certain inalienable rights the schoolmistress is bound to respect. The church also exists to manage the religious side of humanity, and the schoolmaster must keep clear of that. Of course, the common school must not interfere with politics, or fill the boys with any impracticable aspirations for the presidency, or the girls with a longing for the occupation of a palace on the Boston Back-bay. Then it must be borne in mind that scientific training and university life is a world of its own with which the common herd intermeddleth not, and the common-school teacher may only contemplate as she now and then looks at the moon through the great telescope in the college observatory. Above all things, the education of the common people must be "practical." And being practical means, not interfering with the claim of any of these special interests which stand up as tall and as obstinate as the ever-

lasting hills all over the landscape of American life.

By the time the anxious teacher is through with the demands of this type of school-keeping, he finds himself in the same plight as the ambitious youngster who left his native village in pursuit of his fortune, and found himself, at the end of his first year's experimenting, the conductor of a gravel-train on the Hudson-river railway, under strict instructions to "keep out of the way of everything else on the road." Just what a "practical education" for the masses in the common school will mean after the family, the church, the university, the politicians, and the upper ten have had each its own sweet will and way with each pupil, is the thing which, in the expressive language of Lord Dundreary, "no fellow can find out." Governor Wise replied to the demand of the United States Government for the person of John Brown, that, "When Virginia was through with him, the United States could have what was left." What will be left to the common-school teacher, at the end of all these rival demonstrations upon the child, would seem to be fitly expressed in the vernacular of the schoolboy,—"too thin for anything." Indeed, under such a theory, the only vocation of the teacher of public schools would seem to be a sort of mechanical tattooing of the surface of the scholar's mind with useful knowledge, backed by a vigorous injunction to "remember the rock from which he was hewn," and on no account get uneasy with what the leading authorities in his particular beat may declare his "destiny in life."

Of course, there are not many teachers who reason this all out and go to their daily task with one eye always open to the signal of the express-train thundering down their road. But one of the worst results of the persistent assaults upon the people's schools during the past years has

been, a mischievous habit of timidity in the average teacher which is always fearing to overstep limits and get out of the true sphere of public-school work. There are schools so intimidated by ecclesiastical or atheistic arrogance that the teachers are almost afraid to assert that man has a soul, or the universe a God, lest somebody who believes more or less than himself should throw a stone through the school-house window. It is pitiful to behold the lack of intelligent and decisive courage, both in the instruction and discipline of schools, which is so often a paralysis at the very sources of our school-life, changing the schoolmistress from a dignified public official of the State to the cringing maid-servant of half-a-dozen mistresses, each threatening displeasure for the assertion of her womanhood. The trouble is often aggravated by an ignorant, incompetent, or time-serving school board, made up of politicians on the lookout for danger-signals on their journey to office. We know towns, — even cities, — where the public schools are being undermined and made well-nigh useless by this fatal want of self-assertion by school authorities and instructors. It is this wretched superficiality, this feeble fussing with great masses of children and youth, with the interminable worriment that always comes when a body of teachers is trying to please everybody, that, more than anything else, accounts for the discouragement of so many of our best American people with the poor outcome of public-school life. *Nothing is practical which is not, at first, radical;* and this style of timid manipulation of the surface intellect of the average child is the very Devil's receipt for turning it out, not only an unpractical, but an impracticable American citizen. Of course, the old country district school, where the master was master, and carried his

points even at the risk of a batch of broken heads and a stand-up fight once a quarter, was better than the spectacle of a school of specters, fencing in vacuum with weapons of moonshine. Better let the cardinal have his way and hammer something positive, like a pile driven down to hard-pan, into the soul of young Patrick and Bridget, than bring them up in a school whose teacher needs the eyes of Argus to watch her critics, and handles them with mittens so soft that they never find out the reality of anything.

The cure for this pestilent nonsense is the plain up-and-down statement that the *people's common school is the people's university of American citizenship.* For two hundred and fifty years the American people have steadily worked toward a free Republic of the style that is now becoming the leading power of the western continent and the political schoolmaster of the world. On the way to this consummation the American people has run over about everything that has planted itself, with an air of infallible occupancy, across its track. A score of institutions and interests, accounted divine and immortal by their haughty advocates, have bitten the dust before the conquering march of this victorious people. And that man must be a poor student of American history who fancies the American people will submit to the destruction, the undermining, or the paralyzing of that system of free instruction of American children which has "grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength," and is now the very citadel of life in the Republic. The people believe that if the Republic can be sustained and made as vital in every State as it now is in the foremost States, all wholesome interests will find themselves better off than ever before in this world. Family Church, Politics

good Society, the University, Literature, Art, the National Industries, can only attain their highest development in such a nationality as we, the people, are making of this Union. Therefore, with all due respect for the rights of each and all these essential interests, the people propose to make their education in the free school deep and broad and high and rich enough to turn out a generation of youth fit to become good citizens of such a Nationality. Whatever method of instruction or discipline of scholars; whatever training, support, and protection of teachers; whatever taxation, even to the point of self-sacrifice, is essential to this supreme result, will be demanded and sustained by the ruling majority, that always finds out and destroys every enemy to the Republic.

The best policy for the school committee is always the policy that looks to this result. The resolute, intelligent, wise committee-man who "endureth unto the end" will always be indorsed by the final verdict of the people. The noble teacher who stands up to the full stature, not of a crotchety personality, but of manly or womanly professional dignity in the schoolroom, even though persecuted in one city and compelled to flee into another, will have not gone through many States of this Union before the kingdom of the New Education will have come. What we now want is the closing up of the intelligence and Christian character and patriotic resolve of every American community to make the common school the best thing possible; put into it the most competent teacher; make up the train and go ahead, with fair notice of everything to keep off the track. There is no danger that any true religion, or anything else really true, beautiful, practical, and good in our American life will be harmed by such education

of American children as the people are demanding in their own university, the free common school. The verdict "*too thin*" has already gone forth against this caricature of school-keeping of which we have spoken; and the common school must be made strong enough to grow the strong men and women the Republic now demands.

KEEP THE BEST SCHOOL.

One of the most active ward politicians in a large city in New York made a pilgrimage to Washington, thirty years ago, in quest of an office from the incoming President he had worked vigorously to elect. After a week of dangling about the departments, he awoke one day to the solemn fact that none of his little city wires were long enough to touch the great man besieged in the White House. One Monday morning he was seen streaking for the rail-way station, carpet-bag in hand. "Where now, my friend?" shouted a voice from across the street. The sharp reply came back from a man too much in a hurry to turn his head,—"*Straight home,—to keep tavern like thunder and lightning!*" Just that thing he did, for ten years; made his hotel the most comfortable place and himself the best landlord, and one of the most substantial citizens in western New York. By that time, Abraham Lincoln, in the White House, was a good deal more worried to find good men to put in office than our old friend, ten years before, to get an appointment. This time the office came to the man,—a place far more important than the ambitious ward politician had aspired after in his wildest dreams.

The educational public is convulsed with the squabbles of a great crowd of immature school-men, jealous to intolerance from their lack of maturity. There are good people who "flare up" at the very notion that any parent should seriously prefer a private to a public school, or even Harvard or Yale to the new western

State university. There are solemn Yankee professors and "lady principals" of girls' academies who jump to the conclusion that every co-educated girl must be a hoyden and is probably flirting with the Adonis of the adjoining bench. Herr Eckle, of Cincinnati, would put even the Almighty out of the school-room,—a conflict in which Herr Eckle will probably come out second. Across the way, Archbishop Purcell has brought financial wreck upon his province and put himself into spiritual Coventry by a twenty years' crusade to force an infallible church into the public school-house. So does the war rage; a war of different systems and rival methods, each with its army of partizans led by the most intolerant of all popes; a great schoolmaster who has plowed thirty years in one furrow, and sunk himself so deep into the bowels of the earth that he mistakes the sloping sides of his own little educational cañon for the boundaries of the educational universe.

Not that there is any lack of plenty of work for all in fighting the old battle of intelligence, morality and freedom against the swarming host that still wages the war in behalf of "chaos and old night." And each party, in its way, is doing vigorous service against the common enemy. But none of them can deny itself the luxury of an occasional raid upon its rival. So the conflict proceeds, like a naval engagement in which a powerful fleet, ranged in a circle, discharges its outer broadside, at long range, upon the surrounding foe, while its interior broadsides are poured, with murderous effect, upon itself. Just how long the schools of the Republic can "fight it out on that line" without sinking the very cause of liberty, light, and religion itself, might be a fit topic for one of those cantankerous discussions that, now and then, rend the vitals of the

school convention, and make plain, sensible men almost despair of the human race.

Now, two or three things may be safely assumed by American school-men of all sorts. First, that the American people is the most intelligent in all matters concerning public wisdom, freedom, and morality of any people upon earth; and can safely be trusted, in the long run, to find out the most effective way of educating the children into good citizenship. Second, that the aforesaid people is a highly interested listener and spectator of this war of the school-men, is hearing arguments, interviewing experts, and testing results in ways incredible to pedants, but perfectly comprehensible to patriots and statesmen. Third, that, meanwhile, the present generation of American children is growing like the grass and leaves in early May; and since *they* cannot await the judicial decision on the questions at issue, the best people, every where, *will expect every teacher to keep the best school.*

Just what that old tavern-keeper in western New York did, in his line, is the gospel of every teacher, from the President of Harvard College to the feeblest "Sister" in the least parochial school of New Mexico.

The centre of all interest in education for every American parent is *the best school for his children, during the next fifteen years.* The best school in any community will inevitably attract the most substantial people and the most hopeful scholars. Every teacher, of course, is privileged to investigate, experiment, discuss in that all-out-doors realm,—the Best Education. But unless, meanwhile, that teacher keeps school "like thunder and lightning"; goes forth with every morning sun arrayed in the full strength and beauty of the uttermost that God has given him *to do;* the people will

leave him with his theories, will laugh at his little convention-fights, vote him a pedant or an impracticable, and place their children with the man or woman who, in this particular year of our Lord, 1880, with method or without method, actually keeps the best school.

So, dear friends, let us bear in mind the solemn duty of to-day;—to do our level best, according to our present light, with every little child or big student intrusted to our charge. The human race is in the hands of Providence, and, by our faithful efforts, the light will break in through the ages to come as fast as our twilight vision can bear it. But it is comforting to know that the most valuable contribution to pedagogic science is one more good school. Speculation is vain and philosophy all "in the air," until incarnate in a school that actually turns out men and women of whom man and God are not ashamed.

And, sometimes, the most unpretending girl, in a backwoods district, amid a little group of all sorts and sizes of "school material," by the simple might of an unselfish love and the mother-wit that goes without groping to the heart of things and of men, will do, without knowing it, something so deep and wise and beautiful that even the average State convention will sit, for an hour, in peaceful humility at her feet while she tries in vain to tell her secret. Do not be afraid that your school will be overlooked, if 'best' in anything. There is an underground telegraph, with a station in the heart of every wise, righteous, and patriotic mother in America; and every such mother-heart feels a throb when a new good thing is done in any schoolroom in the land.

Our people, every year, believe more obstinately in the full American system of free education; but they

will not risk their children in a poor school because it is free. Every man, whose opinion is worth attention, demands more practical, persistent character-training, according to the method of the great Teacher in that old "summer school" among the hills and lakes of Palestine. But the most zealous church-woman who is, besides, a woman of culture and common-sense, will not send her daughter to a poor school, though housed in a palace, advertised with all pomp and circumstance, and indorsed by a string of eminent names a mile long. It would seem a little superfluous for eminent teachers to waste breath in demonstrating what cannot be done in the school-room. The best methods of education have a way of prevailing in the very face and eyes of the most eminent authorities. If only each of us would give himself, to-day and altogether, to keeping the best school, according to the light he now has; possessing his soul, all the while, in as much patience and charity and hopefulness as may be, it will be all the better for the dear children, and the truth of all our systems and methods will appear, in God's own time.

GOOD READING.

In our youth we remember to have been, for years, on a very short allowance of good reading. We did not read more industriously than half the studious school-boys of to-day, and the country town in Massachusetts where we lived contained an exceptional group of superior families. But, as early as the age of twelve we had absolutely read every book in the town of any possible interest to an inquiring youth; and the advent of a new doctor, who brought the first copy of Shakespeare and a small library of readable books, relieved the stagnation of the situation. But we are inclined to think this very deprivation a good providence. Before sixteen, we had been compelled to read, over and over again, Addison, Dr. Johnson, Shakespeare, Spark's American Biography, and Harper's Family Library; with the novels of Cooper and Miss Sedgwick; one volume of Channing; and, once a week, the respectable *Boston Weekly Messenger*, containing the most celebrated Congressional speeches at an interesting political crisis. All told, before the age of sixteen, our reading was shut up to less than a hundred substantial volumes; but these were read, pondered, and "inwardly digested," and have never been forgotten.

Outside of a few towns and cities, this was a favorable specimen of the reading opportunity of a stay-at-home boy or girl, in New-England, forty years ago. The chief reliance of a young person fond of reading was the private library of the parson, or an occasional cultivated family. The day of village libraries had not

come in, and the weekly debating society, with its introductory lecture, the germ of our present lecture system, was the only literary club. Henry Wilson read through the entire library of a country minister, in New Hampshire, while a "hired man" on a farm, before the age of twenty-one. One of the most charming of the female poets of New England was brought up on the old volume of "elegant poetical extracts," which some of us remember as the best collection of English poetry a generation ago. But out of that intense and persistent reading of a few great books was wrought a culture, both of the appreciative and creative faculty, which has stood the country well in hand through the opening period of American education and authorship. For there can be no doubt, the men and women who have left the strongest impression of original American power upon our country, hitherto, have been trained chiefly in the school of American life in connection with this prodigious reading of a few dozen books that suggested the whole circle of literary culture.

Those days are forever gone, and it is a profitless use of time to scold or weep over the fact that our children live in a new mental heaven and earth. As well might an ocean-steamer, in the mid-Atlantic, complain of a superabundance of water, as the teacher or parent rail against the deluge of books that now threatens to engulf his lively charge. Our children and young people cannot be shut up in a mental closet, after the pattern of the fathers; and the attempt to educate an American youth on mediæval principles develops only a novel phase of modern mental stolidity or brutality. For a modern American who, on principle, ignores the English and American literature and the European science and philosophy of the last half-century, is by

no means, the kind of scholar that existed in that far-off day, but a nondescript; as truly out of place as Fulton, with his original steamboat, in the wake of the Daniel Drew plowing its midnight path from Albany to New York.

The thing we want to save for our children is the habit of intense, patient reading of the world's few good books, or of the best that fall in the way of any particular child. Such books are still rare, and the boy who has climbed a few of them need not tire his legs tramping through the vast realm of foot-hills overlooked from their summits. There is but one way now in which this can be accomplished. If a child, at a proper age, can be thoroughly introduced to one real author, led through his books and brought into vital communion with the "hiding place of his power," he will not be tempted to fill himself with husks; but will go on making the acquaintance of other books and authors of the same sort. It seems to us, that a good deal of the instruction in English literature fails at this point. A pupil is not introduced to English Literature by committing to memory a compendious history of English literature, or even a weekly exercise in repeating poetical "gems." On the contrary, this sort of instruction lays the foundation of that hop-skip-and-jump style of going through authors which leaves the mind of the reader flippant, shallow, and dry; trifling with the surfaces of culture, untouched by the influence of the noblest minds. It may be well to give a high-school or academical class a chart of English authorship, with a few light-houses and buoys indicating the great channels of thought that fertilize the different periods of English and American history. But this is properly the work of the history class and

nothing is really done for the student in literature till some author of commanding power is taken in hand and read thoroughly by teacher and class, till the dullest soul in it comes to know, in some measure, the power of a great book. If but one thing can be done, let it be this. Better give your whole school one session a week with your most accomplished teacher, in the thorough reading of one great author suitable for the class, than fill their minds with a senseless catalogue of authors and titles relieved by a few extracts; like a dull suit of linsey-woolsey illuminated by the dreary glimmer of an occasional brass button sewed upon the homely suit of melancholy grey.

Every good teacher should begin early to teach her children how to read the morning newspaper in fifteen minutes, and the weekly journal or magazine in an hour. Otherwise, our young people will be inevitably swamped in a whelming ocean of journalism, and never find the time to read a good book. Half-a-dozen men and women are the life of American journalism; and the magazinists worth reading can be counted on one's fingers. The bright youth who is initiated, at fourteen, into the art of disemboweling his newspaper and magazine in the least time and the most decisive way, has gained an art more valuable than a college diploma for the vital uses of life.

THE NEW OBSCURANTISTS.

There is an evident determination in several quarters to make things lively in the public schools. Of this we should not complain. The American common school, like all things American, is new, somewhat crude, dependent largely on local prejudice and popular intelligence for its administration, and dealing with a most excitable and turbulent race of youngsters of various races and nationalities, born into a revolutionary period. Of course, there is ample room for criticism, even for sharp comment, and for large reformation in this the most characteristic sphere of American life. There are few intelligent and patriotic observers who cannot suggest improvements; although it is the highest task of administrative wisdom to organize reform. It has been the policy of the author to welcome any suggestion made in a good spirit for the advancement of popular education; for even an impracticable theory may contain the germ of a valuable idea. The teachers and school-men do well to keep their ears wide open to this Babel of criticism and comment; to hear, "ponder, and inwardly digest" all that may be said; with a heart fixed on the highest welfare of the children they are set to train and teach.

But there is one class of critics of our popular schools who certainly try the patience of every fair-minded school-man. We refer to the new sect of cultivated obscurantists who, for the past few years, have been filling the columns of some of our magazines and journals with a passionate and indiscriminating denunciation of

our public-school life and a wholesale and scornful criticism of the intelligence, manners, and morals of American children and youth. It is true, no American man of letters, scholar, scientist, or publicist, of first-rate reputation has appeared in this company. The men and women who thus offer themselves as the apostles of a sweeping reformation, are known chiefly by their success as specialists, often in regions where they could observe little of public-school affairs. But what this fraternity lacks in knowledge is made up in *animus*. Our republican society is a thronging wilderness of facts and events, and it is easy enough for a ready writer, with an animus against republican society, to marshall a host of statistics to prove that Young America is on the high road to perdition, and the public-school master is the champion mischief-maker of the day. The characteristic of the new obscurantism is a fanatical belief in the infallibility of so-called "experts;" really of a self-elected new American aristocracy of "culture;" and a corresponding contempt for the whole idea of popular cultivation of which the public school is the outcome. This understood, a good deal that appears in this quarter can be estimated at its real value.

No man, on the whole, so well represents this unhappy crowd as Mr. Richard Grant White. In his own way, Mr. White has gained an honorable reputation as a sympathetic critic of old English literature, a lively delineator of modern British life, and a persistent fighter in the mighty war about "words" which rages in the philological quarter of our university life. But when he offers himself as a critic on American society and our system of public education, the effect is like the sudden appearance of an irritable scholar, exasperated

by the racket of a street full of noisy school-children, bursting from his study-door and firing, right and left, a shower of missiles, including the dictionary and the ink-stand, to the infinite diversion of the boisterous crowd. His recent articles in the *North American Review* and the *New York Times* are simply the passionate scolding of a crotchety man of letters, just in from his European tour, provoked by the discomforts and disgusts of American society. Their only valuable quality is their revelation of the animus that is the soul of the new obscurantism; and this, stripped of its disguise of a literary, scientific, and refined dialect, is simply the old faith in the infallibility of a class and the sovereign contempt for the possibilities of the people, which has been the one implacable and Protean enemy of American society, from the beginning even to our day.

Mr. White, in the *North American Review*, begins by a characteristic history of the public school. In the true spirit of metropolitan conceit, he dates the real establishment of the present system from the year 1842, when the city of New York was compelled to give up the rickety machine by which one Protestant sect had monopolized its education, the Public-School Society, and fall into line with the great common-school system of the Empire State. Our critic seems never to have heard of Horace Mann, of Barnard, and Paige, and Lewis, and Guilford, who years before had led the Northern American people to establish the improved common school from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, leaving a few obstinate, exceptional communities, like the cities of Albany and New York, to fall in at their leisure. Mr. White is one of the last "relicts" of that venerable band of mourners who cursed Governor

Seward so heartily for his public-school reforms; and he now parades his rusty weeds to a new generation, as the latest fashion of a new school of culture. The good people of New York will now learn, for the first time, that the Hon. William Tweed was the apostle of this new heresy, the metropolitan public school!

Equally absurd is the use made of Mr. Walton's Report of the Norfolk County Examination, enlarging on the reckless declaration of Mr. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., that the schools "went to pieces" under the test. Mr. White accepts as gospel every statement from every quarter that impeaches the value of our public-school education. What "comes from so many quarters must be true." But who are these "competent observers" who pronounce our schools a failure? Certainly not the superior teachers, the most intelligent school committee-men, the most celebrated experts from foreign lands; the people who most carefully measure the state of popular intelligence, the increasing interest in all departments of good culture, the condition of those communities where the schools have been most faithfully worked, the political poise of the responsible majority of the country during the past twenty years. Not these; but a miscellaneous crowd, largely ignorant of the real condition of the people, largely prejudiced, and altogether unable to prove its wholesale assertion. The Norfolk examination simply proved, what every good school-man knows, that a country district school taught by untrained teachers, without responsible supervision, is not a grand success. No school in Norfolk County, well taught and supervised, "went to pieces." The loose charge of a few West Point professors and army officers, of a decline in popular intelligence inferred from examinations for admission to that school, has

been so effectually answered by Superintendent Rickoff, that even Mr. White would have not referred to it had he once read the refutation. Indeed the only thing apparent here is the *animus*. Every such assertion, however vague, unauthorized, malicious, "must be true," because popular education is a humbug only second to republican government.

Next, Mr. White becomes philosophical. Education he defines, "*the acquiring of such knowledge as can be got in schools and from books;*" and proceeds to a furious denial that such education is essential either to worthy manhood or good government. Who has said it is? No public school-man in America would risk his reputation on such a pitiful definition of 'education.' The obtaining of knowledge either from books or teachers is neither the first nor the second aim of the public school. More than half the work in any good school is the training of character, morals, and manners. A large part of the remaining half of the public schoolmaster's task is to awaken the love of truth, train the faculties and expand the mental horizon for its acquirement. The knowledge obtained in the most complete course of schooling, including the university, could be imparted to a prepared mind in two or three years. But the training in character, in mental discipline, in that mental rectitude which lies at the foundation of all culture and makes knowledge a blessing, is the slow and difficult work of years. "*Ignorance has no relation to vice,*" says Mr. White. What we call ignorance is almost invariably found in connection with an indifference to truth, a contempt for knowledge, a supreme self-conceit, and a narrow mental horizon. There are many things called 'culture' which do not touch the root of the matter by awakening and training the love

of truth. Such culture deserves all that is said against it. But the schooling that takes the average American ignoramus and sends him out the kind of boy that the majority of our faithful public-school scholars become, is one of the most powerful agencies in the cause of intelligence, good morals and good citizenship. Here again comes in the *animus*. The popular American notion that ignorance is dangerous to the republic must be branded as a contemptible prejudice. Our philosopher affirms that poverty is the mother of vice; the fruitful parent of all the follies and diabolisms of society. What a mistake, then, in Omniscience to raise up as the Redeemer of mankind "the son of man," who "had not where to lay his head." Mr. White need not leave the island of Manhattan to learn that, not poverty, but the unhallowed love of money and its Godless use is "the root of all evil." And of all deadly weapons wielded by godless wealth, the ignorance of thousands of people in that great city is the most effective against the peace of the State.

But the final absurdity is still to come. Mr. White has fallen upon a pamphlet by the Hon. Zachary Montgomery of California, which proves the case against the public-school system "as undeniably as the truth of Newton's theory of gravitation," by astronomical calculation. "The census returns show that crime, immorality, and insanity are greater in proportion to population in those communities which have been long under the influence of the public-school system, than they are in those which have been without it." Then follows an elaborate contrast between the six New England States and the old six Atlantic Southern States, based on the census of 1860. Mr. White would have been spared the peril of his indorsement of this preposterous

document had he taken the pains to consult the report of Mr. Carroll D. Wright, chief of Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, in the Annual Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education, 1879. In this admirable pamphlet, which should be in the hands of every American teacher, Mr. Wright subjects this formidable array of statistics to a thorough examination, and demolishes every inference drawn from them so completely that no serious answer has been attempted. First it is shown, by the testimony of Gen Walker, Superintendent of Census, that neither in 1860 nor in 1870 were there any reliable national statistics of pauperism and crime. Second, this estimate is utterly misleading, as to crimes, from the great dissimilarity of the criminal code in the two sections. There were fifty offenses known to Massachusetts law in 1860, unknown to the criminal law of Virginia. More than 54 per cent. of commitments to prison in Massachusetts, in 1860, were for crimes which in Virginia would have been punished only by fine, and not have appeared in prison statistics. Third, a thorough analysis of New England pauperism, lunacy, and crime places the vast burden of it to the account of the untaught foreign population that fills its manufactoring towns, and even in its second generation can only be partially affected by the common school. There is no bottom to this absurd theory, as set forth by Mr. White and the anti-school statisticians. And no one has more completely knocked the wind out of this style of assertion than the honored Superintendent of Schools for Virginia, Dr. Ruffner. Yet, the sect of obscurantists will still go on, quoting the visionary theories and parading the misleading figures of Dabney, Montgomery, and the rest. It is, again, the *animus*.

What has Mr. White to propose as a remedy for the mischief-making American common schools? Nothing but a retreat upon the system of stingy State support of a meagre elementary instruction for people too poor to buy it for themselves; essentially the plan of some of our Southern States for the common people, before the war. But our reformer again is too late. Every Southern State, within the past ten years, has repudiated that plan and planted itself squarely on the American public school. Every civilized country to-day is out of sight of his panacea. This system of popular education has been kicked down the back-stairs by the common consent of Christendom. The trouble with Mr. Richard Grant White, as with this whole sect of cultivated obscurantists, of which he is the prophet, is that he has just been awakened out of sleep by the mighty stir of the new republic getting itself together to posess a new continent and inaugurate the new order of human affairs, in which an instructed and righteous people shall govern itself, using aristocracies of every style, and being ruled by none of them. In his amazement, like a man in an earthquake, he flutters about, protesting against everything, and proposing, as the only hope of the Nation, a return to the Public School Society of New York of 1842; the ante-bellum order of affairs in the Atlantic Southern States, and the system of schooling for the people that was declared a delusion and a sham by Thomas Jefferson a hundred years ago. All these things are as dead as the corpse of Julius Cæsar; and about the poorest use that Mr. Grant and his disciples can make of their literary ability is to hover about the cemetery watching the opportunity to play the *rôle* of "resurrection-man" in the majestic drama of our new American life.

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF IT.

A good and finely cultivated lady, one of the mild critics of the schools, relates her grievance somewhat in this fashion: "I was brought up in a Boston family and my father's house, through my early girlhood, was the resort of many people that have since become famous. My education was received partly from teachers at home and the best private schools. At eighteen, I concluded, with a young friend, to take the course in one of the State Normal Schools; and have always been glad I did so. But there I met a class of girls I had never before known; graduates of the public schools of Boston. They were well up in a certain line of school studies, but so curiously uncultivated in manners, knowledge of the world, and the thousand indescribable acquirements that make an accomplished and effective young lady, that I was amazed at what I saw. From that time I have felt that the public school needed a great reform, — I dont exactly know what; but something that will send out girls better fitted for society, with broader views and a more general knowledge of human affairs."

Our *Atlantic Monthly* takes up another branch of the same complaint, and asserts that the public schools develop a sort of public type of character and manners, and "train their pupils to meet an audience." A good many well-to-do ladies in society object to a certain lack of lady-like "tone" and gentleness in the average school-mistress, even when she is the complete product of the whole graded course, including

the normal school. The old doctor in our native village struck a similar key when the new doctor brought the first copy of Shakespeare to town: "That Shakespeare makes boys sassy, and ought to be put down."

Now, the good lady aforesaid was only a little short in her logic, besides leaving out some important factors in her premise. Her training had been the most felicitous possible. Her school was a cultivated home in a famous city in vital social relations with the most cultivated families, visited in a familiar way by men and women whose names are now embalmed in American history. Of course, her general schooling was at first-hand. She lived in an atmosphere of broad ideas, striking events, and noble sentiments; always taught to look beyond her own little sphere and include all classes of people, her country, and the progress of our many-sided modern civilization, in her thought and conversation. At the normal school she met the able, forcible, conscientious girl who is the type of nine-tenths of the best women, even in Boston, and the overwhelming majority in any American community. This girl probably came up in a family moderately intelligent and thoroughly worthy of respect: but whose social surroundings included none of the specially cultivated or in any way remarkable people of the town. It is doubtful if one of these girls had ever spoken to a famous man, or even been in a room with a highly cultivated woman, with the exception of the school-room relation with her superior teachers. With all the substantial social virtues, she was greatly deficient in what is called "social training." Of course, the whole realm of general knowledge, the peculiar way of looking at things which was so familiar to her new associate, was to her like a far-off world. But what had the public school to

do with that? It had given her the elements of a solid education, lifted her to a position where by her own efforts she would probably find herself in a place where, for the first time, she would enjoy those rare opportunities of cultivated society and the friendship of eminent people to which her companion was born. The schools had given her the best foundation for a broad, genial, and refined womanhood. No school could give her that social training and peculiar intimate knowledge of the upper strata of this world's affairs in which our friend found her deficient. But twenty years hence, when this girl finds herself the wife of a New York clergyman; the mistress of a wheat-farm in Minnesota; the maiden sister called to rear the family of a brother who is a banker in New Orleans; her Boston school-training will be seen for what it is,—the very central element of the cultivation that makes her a leader in society, and it will distinguish her from the other class of "young ladies";—who, with early social opportunities and a superficial education, find themselves, in middle life, the ornaments, but not the rulers of society; because they fail at the very point where the thorough training of the superior public school comes in.

Just so with the multitudes of public-school children who come swarming up from the vast realm of social life below the kind of people of which we have spoken. Half the children in the public schools of any city come from homes where the very words, "good society," too often "good morals" or "decent manners," have no meaning. If these little ones in five years are taught respectful manners, self-possession, the great art of standing before their superiors without base fear or cringing humility, can step to a school-platform and

make a good appearance before their parents and friends, one would say here is a positive gain of valuable knowledge and handsome behavior, which will stand by them in their whole future, and probably go far toward insuring their worthy success in life.

In other words, a good education, such as can now be obtained by the humblest child in a good common school, is the bed-rock on which can be built up the noblest fabric of good culture, christian character, reliable citizenship, or artistic refinement; while without such foundation, it will be found well nigh impossible to develop the best type of the American character in any body. And a great many of the extraordinary people of the time forget this, and censure the schools for not doing what the most famous university cannot achieve. We repeat, — *No school can do the work of a cultivated home, a pure church, or a practical training in the actual affairs of life.* But any good school can do that for any faithful pupil, without which, neither home, nor church, nor wealth, nor all the glory of this world can insure our boys against barbarism and keep our girls out of the limbo of frivolity. If these numerous distinguished critics will do their own duty by young America, the schools will not be found wanting in their contribution to the new kingdom that is to come.

BROAD-GAUGE TEACHING.

There are criticisms of the schools which are nonsense, and criticisms founded on stubborn sense. Men of affairs say that the ordinary high-school graduate is ignorant of common affairs. The cultivated people complain that even the normal-school girl knows nothing but her school books and her methods. And, nothwithstanding the fact that the school teachers are probably the best educated class outside the three old professions, our polite society still insists that the whole common-school crowd is lacking in social refinement. It is very easy to flare up against these charges; a good deal easier than to prove they are not "founded in fact." Here, as in other doubtful matters, it is better to go on to remove the cause of complaint than to protest against exaggeration.

All such criticisms, with many others now afloat, touch upon one serious drawback to a good deal of the present instruction in all our schools. In the absence of a thoroughly developed professional class of a hundred thousand first rate school teachers, we are compelled to carry on our vast system of elementary instruction by the help of a great body of young men and women who neither are, nor intend to become, educational experts. To make the matter worse, we insist that this, the most responsible public service in America, shall be given for the average compensation of a skilled house-servant or a fair mechanic. Of course, even for this small pay we get much better work than we deserve. For teaching is not only respectable, but it

also appeals to the noblest principles; and hundreds of splendid young men and women are serving the children, often the humblest in the land, far more for love than for money. Still it is true that, under these circumstances, large numbers of our teachers know little except the books from which they hear lessons. The majority have no thorough acquaintance with the subject of these text-books.

Many who are well up in the subjects they teach are deficient, often strangely deficient, in reliable knowledge of the common affairs of life, and only a moderate portion of this hardworking hundred thousand have ever enjoyed those opportunities for social culture which place their graduates at the head of social affairs, and add so largely to the charm of mental and moral acquirements. It is useless to deny this fact, and the fact is a drawback to the value of our present school instruction in this country. It is no valid objection to our national idea of popular education, or to our present school system. It is not true concerning an increasing and important class of our superior teachers. It simply detracts from the value of a good deal of the instruction and influence proceeding from a numerous body of teachers in all sorts of American schools.

The first reply to this charge is the old repartee of Dr. Johnson about the servant girls, "You can't have all the virtues for three and sixpence a week." Everybody endowed with common sense understands that cheap things are poor things. But, strange to say, this shrewdest of all peoples makes itself a cheap Jack in its educational affairs, and demands in the school-room a knowledge, wisdom, breadth of culture, and loftiness and refinement of character which is almost the exception in the established professions and the most eminent

society in the Nation. If the people want thorough cultivation, broad general intelligence, and established character with fine manners in the school-room, why do they insist in bribing every immature and needy young man and woman who has recited through a few school-books, to assume the office of instruction? And when they find a lady of rare gifts and graces in the place, why is every rough and stingy tongue let loose against her till she is worried out of her place, by tinkering with her salary? Why do wealthy cities of fifty thousand people haggle over the few hundred dollars that will keep a tried schoolmaster or superintendent, and beat the bush, year after year, to get first-class work in the most critical points of their school system, for third-rate pay? Why does the highest salary of the most eminent teacher and supervisor of schools stop short at the point where numbers of young ministers, lawyers, doctors, and even salesmen begin, on the upward flight to a competence.

The short way to deal with this criticism is to say plainly to the sovereign people: It is no merit of yours that the teaching in American schools is as good as now. If you demand high things in the school-children, call the highest class in the land to instruct them. You do not expect what we are talking about,—thorough culture, broad information, established character, fine social tact, from young people at all; from any save a select class after long experience and professional training. You refuse to accept the only conditions under which teaching can become true professional work. You fill the school-rooms with multitudes of worthy young people, who are kept there by their necessities, and then tell us the public schools are a failure, and the private schools are a sham. Fulfill the conditions, and you shall have instruction that will meet the highest demand.

It cannot be too sharply impressed on our people that school work, in the modern sense, is the most difficult of all things done in the land. This, even when nothing but creditable scholarship is demanded as the result. But when to this we add the demand for a style of instruction that shall ultimate in good citizenship, we multiply the difficulty. The sober truth is, that the vast majority of our teachers are doing their level best now. There is no reasonable hope of better instruction while the people refuse to supply the conditions of a broader success. Improved methods have done all they can, until experts can be found to work the methods. Supervision is no panacea; its outcome depends on the teachers who are supervised. It is even inhuman in the last degree to coax and bribe these multitudes of needy, inexperienced young people to assume the noblest of human professions, and then visit them with cultivated scorn and public indifference or wrath because of their failure to accomplish what never yet was well done except by people carefully trained, adequately supported, and held up to their lofty work by all the incentives that appeal to the finest souls.

But the short way of dealing with things spiritual is not always quite satisfactory. There is another side to this matter, to which we shall call attention.

In the foregoing we have endeavored to set forth a remedy for the acknowledged defect of narrowness and lack of general culture in much of our work in the schoolroom. We found one explanation of the difficulty in the low ideal and stingy practice of the people, who presist in calling to the most responsible work large numbers of persons unfitted by culture, maturity of character, and executive tact, for the care of children.

We insisted that the people receive a great deal more for their money than they have reason to expect, from the small sum they are willing to pay the average teacher. We recently visited a portion of New England, celebrated as the birthplace of half-a-dozen of the greatest American characters of the past half-century, and "noble women not a few." Yet these towns are actually paying, to-day, smaller wages for the teachers of their district schools than are demanded by ordinary servant-girls and young women who cut and make dresses in the suburban towns of Boston. We are glad to know that faithful servants and women, who live by the labor of their hands, are well paid. But as long as superior young women in New England are expected to teach school on starvation-wages, the people have no reason to expect that a broad-gauge educational train can be run on the narrow-gauge track laid by their own indifference and petty economy.

But, of course, this "short answer" does not fully meet the case. As a matter of fact, even in the wealthiest parts of the North, thousands of our finest young women are teaching school amid embarrassments of which the poor pay is not the greatest. And when we go South and learn the grievances of the teachers, men and women, our compassion for their lot is often lost in envy and admiration for the noble spectacle of self-sacrificing toil that illumines so many school-rooms. In other words, the teacher's work, in the last analysis, is not a job but a ministry often more attractive to the loftiest minds for the trials and drawbacks that make it disgusting to a sordid and self-indulgent soul. Hence the school-rooms of the nation are really filled with a higher class of teachers than we should expect, considering the discouragements of the profession. Thou-

sands on thousands of admirable people go into the school-house on Monday morning inspired by an elevation of purpose, a tenderness of affection, and a heroic self-sacrifice that might be the model for the clergy who mount the pulpit on Sunday. So this problem of broad-gauge teaching is not to be solved alone by an increase of material facilities. The improved school-house with its model furniture, the latest edition of text-books, shining apparatus, and generous salary may all be presented, and yet the verdict "One thing thou lackest," may fully explain the want of breadth, practical adaptation, and common sense in the instruction given to the children.

That one thing, without which the most cultivated teaching will run to narrowness, pedantry, and impracticability, is the childlike spirit of consecrated love, whereby the girl-teacher finds her way to the heart of the child; the great professor lays his hand on the will of the freakish sophomore, and the wise parent brings up a family "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." *The chief obstacle to good teaching is moral unfitness.* Where one teacher fails from lack of knowledge and technical training, a hundred fall through pride, laziness, lack of self-control, dryness of affection, and languid interest in their scholars. It is not difficult for a "smart" man or woman to get a school in fair running order and obtain the average result of school-book information, even to extemporize a little daily spurt of fireworks in the ten-minute object-lesson required in the course of study. But whether the teacher shall break through this shell of formal instruction and drive at the souls of the children, waking up a commotion, making the blind to see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, and thrilling the dullest spirit with a gospel of

"truth in the inward parts," depends entirely on the morale of the teacher. If he is a pedant, a self-seeker, a shirk, a little man occupied in flying a splendid kite of "culture"; if she is a heartless, godless, ambitious girl, or even the regulation "young lady teacher" with an eye on something to which her school is but the ladder, that work will not get done. But if a teacher is in charge who cannot sleep o'nights at the thought of how stupid these children are, spite of all they know, every morning will witness a "reconnaisance in force," and every week a grand assault upon this concentrated mass of dullness, indifference, and ugliness that is the citadal of the enemy's power.

There are few teachers now in our schools who do not know enough about common things to interest their pupils in various matters of vital interest in common life. Almost every teacher is able to illustrate every lesson from her own reading, observation, and experience. And, certainly, the most ordinary teacher may learn, every week, enough from her pupils to become the most vigorous student in the school. Indeed, nowhere are found such incentives to genuine study, hard thinking, accurate observation, self-discipline, and high training in manners, morals, and executive force as in the position of teacher. If the men and women now employed by the people would really use these advantages in behalf of the children as they might, our school-keeping would spring to life, like the dead man raised from the bier by the mighty power of incarnate love.

But whether this will be done depends on nobody but the teachers. They can exhaust themselves by deploring the hardships of their lot, pitying themselves and protesting against the people who thus oppress them. We shall all say,—"Yes, your plea is true; but

what would have become of this world if they who have been called to minister in the upper realm of life had spent their strength in this way?" Because a few heroic souls, in every difficult strait in the past, have put these things behind them and wrought for love's sake, the great dull mass of mankind has been somewhat awakened, and you occupy the vantage-ground of to-day. The moment the liberal professions take the attitude of the man of business; face the people and demand better pay, broader privileges, higher rank; the people instinctively declare them no longer liberal and despise the clergyman, the teacher, the physician, the author, while they acknowledge the force of their claim. For, really, the one element in life that saves mankind from utter unbelief and despair, and keeps alive a mighty hope that, after all, this is God's world, is the self-sacrificing labors of the few faithful who are so thankful they can work for men in the highest way, that they almost forget how meanly the world recieves them. So the true teacher may "thank God and take courage"; for this very element of sacrifice and hardship is the "hiding-place of his power"; the sole condition of his deepest influence over children, parents, and the great cause of a true education.

The "conclusion of the whole matter" is, that while the people have no excuse for that narrow economy which drives from the school-rooms the teachers who could easily inaugurate a broader and loftier style of instruction; yet, the teachers already on the ground have far less excuse for their great defect of moral force which is the key to so much inefficient work with the children.

GRADE YOUR SCHOOL.

The complaint is sometimes made that our educational journals are constructed exclusively for graded schools, and are of little service to the great mass of country teachers, whose work lies amid the distractions of a district school ranging from ten to thirty pupils. The complaint opens up the whole subject of school grading, and points to a wide-spread delusion concerning school work. It is assumed, even by people of great scholastic reputation, that the ideal school is a private tutorship where a celebrated teacher brings all his resources to bear on one child; that, next to this, a little select private school is best, because the individuality of each pupil can thus be preserved; and in public schools the best work should be done in the small country district. According to this estimate, Satan enters the paradise of individualism with the first attempt at grading, while the metropolitan system is only another name for a superficial drill of children in brigades, resulting in sham and cram and the ultimate suppression of all proper individuality.

Now this, like many another beautiful theory, runs against the everlasting laws and most obvious facts of life. The individuality of the humblest human being is a matter which chiefly concerns the Creator. No teacher can do much to foster it, and no man is strong enough to suppress it. What is called "developing the individuality" in little squads of children, in small schools, is chiefly the attempt of an obstinate pedagogue to force his own type of character and favorite notions

upon his pupils. The result is either an arrested development of the child's proper individuality or a bitter duel between the two, all the more intense because fought out behind the mask of school proprieties. If the teacher will give the pupil mental and spiritual sea-room, deal with him in the spirit of love, reverence for truth, and earnest desire to assist him in the best use of his own powers, he can safely leave the development of individuality to the providential school of life. And in this work *the influence of children upon each other is often far more important than any work of the teacher.* Indeed, the final proof of the true teacher is the ability to make a proper classification of his pupils, so that each may exert the most healthful influence upon all, and the whole school be brought in as a corps of assistants in the training of every child. God's method of developing true individuality is not to invite a strong man to "sit down" on a little child, or an enthusiastic school-mistress to "overlay" the baby intellect of a five-year-old boy. It is illustrated when a wise, reverent, skillful teacher disposes a crowd of children in classes and grades so that the entire spiritual power of a large school is brought to bear as an elevator for every member. This is the reason that all educational journals that deserve the name are adjusted for graded schools. A journal full of minute directions for puttering over a dozen children, in as many separate classes, would resemble a treatise on military tactics which treated chiefly of the duty of sentinels, scouts, and bummers, and left the movements of the grand army untouched. The thing for the country school-mistress to do is to *grade her school.* If she does not understand what that means, let her find out by subscribing for and reading a first-class educational journal,

reinforced by a good treatise on school-keeping and the best observation and thought of which she is capable. If nothing comes of this, let her say "yes" to the first respectable offer to do anything, so it remove her from the school-room and give the children a chance to be taught in the only effective way.

HARD-PAN.

The educational muddle, just now, is not due to a false organization of educational forces, or a top-heavy and impracticable system, as the critics are in the habit of saying. It comes out in the administration of the system. In every nook and corner of this administration, with our characteristic national haste and superficiality, we are bringing ourselves into a vicious contentment with poor work. The country is full of fine young men and women who, with patient study and thorough training, could become the most effective teachers of children in the world. But how many of them are willing to "endure unto the end," waiting till they are fit to be entrusted with that most sacred responsibility, the charge of a school. Our best methods of instruction are the admiration of every parent and scholar competent to form an opinion. But how few, even of the graduates of the Normal School, are willing to pray and toil for that insight into human nature and that childlike spirit without which the finest method is the most dismal sham! Sitting day after day in the school-rooms, in our journeyings up and down the land, the "whole head becomes sick and the whole heart faint" with the thought, — "How little of this work really touches bottom anywhere!" how much of it is only raising a dust on the surface of the pupil's mind! and how rare a thing it is that the foundation-stones of this temple of knowledge rest upon the hard-pan!" The man who, in this month of March, should build a house on the frozen mud of Illinois or the ice of a

Northern lake, would expect that wreck and ruin would follow an April thaw. But we, schoolmen and teachers, go on, year after year, building in the shallow surfaces of the child's nature, not realizing that the first great upheaval of passion or ambition or selfish interest, a few years later, will dispose of our fine fabric and leave our boasted culture a medley of brilliant fragments.

As long as the critics ply the rod in this direction, let us thank them for their fidelity, and repent ourselves of everything in our school work that does not go down to a foundation in human nature that cannot be washed away. The best teachers need perpetual warning to hold them up to the highest demands of their own reason and conscience. The majority of parents do not expect, and the mass of children resist thoroughly, honest dealing in school. They expect the finest results of culture without the thorough work which lays the foundation of every real temple of knowledge. They are impatient of the wise and faithful instructor who will not be coaxed or driven a hair's breadth beyond the real capacity of the child. But just here the teacher must stand fast or all is lost. The moment this point is yielded the Evil One comes in, and shiftlessness, half-knowledge, bungling, and inefficient education are only a question of time. Every true worker in the realm of mind must bear the cross. And the teacher's cross so often comes in the temptation to yield to the demands of maternal fondness and permit the pupil to run along the surfaces of things with no firm foothold on the solid earth! The test of the real teacher is the ability to shoulder this cross, to insist on reality, on thoroughness, on genuine awakening and training of the mind, at all hazards. And the

teacher who can do this is sure of the future; sure of a harvest more bountiful as the years go on in the life of every school-child that has responded to his powerful mastership. The Kingdom of God will begin to come in the school-room when the teachers are ready to obey the Word,—"When they persecute you in one city, flee into another." The smallest group of teachers, in any community, resolutely standing on the hard-pan, always ready to go if the people will not bear a true administration of their office, will finally wake up a revival in education and bring in a new day of hope for the children.

In our more cultivated communities the teachers are always in danger of being deceived by a brightness and general nimbleness of mind that the children gain from their contact with a brilliant and rapid society. We have been in many a school-room where the real lesson of the hour was lost amid the glitter and sparkle of a class of bright misses who could almost "deceive the very elect" with the fancy that they knew everything when they had no real knowledge of the topic in hand. What a cruelty it is to send out this great crowd of smart and saucy youth with the impression that all things in life can be won by a brilliant charge of bayonets, only to dash themselves against the awful adamant of God's eternal truth that "knows no variableness nor shadow of turning"! Our faithful teachers of the colored people in the great schools of the South are in perpetual danger of being washed off their foundations by a flood of sentiment, a blind eagerness, a passional surge, or any one of a dozen interesting traits of character in the freedman, which blinds the eyes of his teacher and preacher to his imperative need of accurate knowledge, right habits of thinking, and a mental

training that will liberate him from the peril of his own tropical imagination and unbridled motive-power. Nothing will stand in our new structure of Southern education that is not founded on the rock. And nothing will endure anywhere, however magnificent its name or seductive its promise, that does not make the eternal realities of physical and spiritual nature its point of departure, and build on the foundation that cannot be moved.

CHRISTMAS.

Herewith goes a Christmas greeting from the sanctum to all teachers of schools; all school-boys and school-girls; all harrassed school committeemen and women; all parents of children, large and small; all experts of the new education, including fogies of the old education, good-natured or otherwise. We throw THE JOURNAL upon the table with other Christmas gifts, hoping to be welcomed as not the least of the friends who make up the catalogue when the books of affection are posted to the tune of the Christmas chimes.

Of all festivals that relieve our sorely-jaded American life, the Christmas holiday is the most characteristic of the new time and the new republic. We do not celebrate the old English or the new German Christmas. But, as in all things else, we are blending the solid comfort and substantial joy of old England and the freakish imagery and the boisterous delight of the German-land, with features purely American, in making up the program for the holiday season that begins with Christmas eve and ends with New Year's night. Already the Yankee who fought off Christmas as the crowning heresy for two hundred years, has fallen in, and goes for Christmas festivities in the intense, swift way with which he hunts every thing desirable. Now Boston is already an unmitigated jam with the rush after Christmas. The great West roars with joy like one of its great prairie storms. The Knickerbocker spreads

himself through a whole week of miscellaneous frolic, intermingled with the merry jangle of great church bells. The new South looks into the eyes of the children, forgets the troubled past, and glimpses the vision of the mighty future in her imperial domain. All the best things in the celebration of Christmas in the old world appear in new form, with novel combinations in some realm of our blessed America.

Christmas is the real children's holiday of the year. The youngsters prize their school-vacation far more for quality than quantity. The long summer weeks become, at last, a heaviness; while the short, intense vacation of the Christmas holidays crowds a year's delight into a week of uproarious fun. There is just the keynote to this holiday that permits every beautiful variation, from grave to gay, in the life of the little folk. One of our great newspapers tells us the American Christmas is already a secular festival. But secular it certainly is not in the narrow, materialistic sense of the word. Rather is it especially religious in its consecration of all the general, gladsome, even grotesque elements, that make up the life of the disciple of the "new commandment" of love. It is an incalculable gain to the cause of piety, good morals, and true education, that the young can, for one week in the year, be relieved from the solemnity and severity too often regarded their indispensable companions, and shown again the mighty meaning of those exhortations to "rejoice in the Lord in the beauty of holiness;" to "praise the Lord with gladness;" and to follow wisdom as the lovliest prize of life.

The true way to rescue the beautiful side of life from its curse, is to show that the most intense enjoyment and the most delicious fun are the handmaids of

that heavenly trinity,—truth, beauty, and love, — that abides in the kingdom of heaven.

But Christmas is not alone a season of merry-making. All its delights go forth from the manger in Bethlehem, and with every hour of its celebration the heart turns with thoughtful, serious contemplation to the awful mystery that hovers over the new-born son of God and man. And to no one does this serious and solemn reflection come with more impressive force than to the teacher in the people's school. Whatever the creed or form of faith, every wise and true-hearted instructor of children recognizes in the Great Teacher the ideal of his own lofty work; the safe guide in the way of teaching, and the spirit that should pervade the school. We speak of the "New Education" as if modern science had created some novel method of training the mind and moulding the character of youth. But all our improved methods of instruction in home, church, and school are but a faint approach to the inimitable method of Him who went about Palestine waking up the minds, opening the eyes, and training the mental life of the common people. They "heard him gladly," just as the most uncultured crowd in America to-day listens with breathless delight when the true teacher comes to them in the divine way of sincerity, simplicity, and fidelity to the common facts of their life. The new discipline in the schoolhouse, the prison, and the family is only our feeble attempt to work out the law of love, the Lord's prayer, and the golden rule. Our boasted science is only the waking up to the stupendous truth proclaimed by the master through his wondrous works and mystic words, — the truth that the soul is the sovereign of nature, and as the centuries roll on, is destined to unlock the mysteries, compre-

hend the laws and wield the forces of the material world. That expert of the New Education who undertakes to cut away his little system from its vital connection with the spirit and the methods of the Divine Teacher of the modern world, is like the man who should pass his sharp knife between the tender blades of the growing grain and their roots under ground, and then demand the teeming harvest that rolls across the prairie in billows of gold.

And here comes in the great, good hope of every teacher that really loves his work and does it in the best way, waiting on Providence. To the dull eye of worldliness, what sight more unpromising than the child Jesus in the manger, with a price already on his head? To the proud pedantry of selfish culture what spectacle less inspiring than the ignorant crowd lying upon the slopes while the new Teacher held forth in the Sermon on the Mount? What school, what community of any race, class, or tribe, more capricious, unmanageable, unteachable than the multitudes that followed the man of Nazareth, one day proclaiming him the king, another day crying: "Let him be crucified"? Surely, if anybody ever had reason to think meanly, in a hopeless way, of human nature, it was that little band of pupil-teachers left behind when the Master had gone away and the comforter had not yet come. But when, in some moment of quiet reflection, amid the holiday tumult, the faithful teacher looks out upon the town in which she lives, with its churches, its free education for all, its blended liberty and order, its Christian charities and social courtesies, its happy homes, even in their darkest trials cheered by light from heaven,—how can she despair of her own work when so much has already been achieved? So let the very pleasures and frolics of the

Christmas holiday bear this lesson to all whose vocation is with the children, — that with every little child is born a mighty hope for mankind; and that of all things done in this world nothing so honors our humanity and prophesies our immortality, as wise, patient, consecrated service among the little ones in the spirit of Him who took little children in his arms and blessed them, saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

MECHANISM VS. MIND.

There are two sorts of vigorous school-teachers whose work ultimates itself in widely different results.

The one is, to some extent, the outcome of our new and severe system of grading in large city schools. Where the material of these schools will permit, the system often becomes little less than a prodigious machine, into one end of which the infant of five years disappears, to emerge, at twenty, a full-fledged graduate in school lore. Now there is no absolute necessity that a good graded school should be a foe to a proper development of the pupil. There is a good deal of nonsense among amateur schoolmen, in regard to the development of individuality through school life. Individuality is the stamp of God on body and soul, and can neither be greatly increased nor diminished by any meddling of man. The one essential work of the sanitarian is to minister to the general health of the body. A good beefsteak, pure air, sunshine, water, and exercise turn out blue eyes and auburn hair, or black eyes in the brunette, according to the mysterious intention of Him who abhors monotony and never repeats Himself in the least of His creations. In like manner, a good method of general mental training, with wholesome moral and industrial discipline, will turn out numberless varieties of scholarly character, while the conceited pedagogue who attempts to fumble with this miracle of individuality will succeed only in becoming a temporary tyrant and a nuisance in the school-room.

The evil that comes from a mechanical abuse of the graded system is not so much the neglect to develop the individuality, as the utter failure to move the springs of that common culture which is the first necessity of real education.

An over-zealous teacher can easily become infatuated with the superficial working of a thoroughly graded school. There are always a few bright children in every school-room who eagerly take to well-ordered methods of instruction, kindle their own fire as they go, and, unless held well in hand, monopolize the real work of the class. The enthusiastic teacher is captured by their readiness, whirled onward by their vivacity, and, spite of himself, often comes to look on them as his entire brigade. They, in turn, inspire the dull and dependent majority with a superficial habit of imitation and readiness to catch correct answers, so that the very elect are often misled. The result is seen in thousands of schools, where the mechanical habit of discipline and instruction is carried to a marvelous point. Before such a class we stand, as in the presence of some wonder-working piece of mechanism, afraid even to think there may be an illusion under this stupendous show of mental activity, yet conscious that no healthy child can be so "smart" as every child appears to be. The misery of it all is, *that no pupil in the room has really been trained or taught in any deep and vital way.* The whole movement is mechanical; transmitted from the intense vigor of the teacher, through the more energetic pupils, to the entire crowd. And it resembles real teaching much as the tremendous buzz, awakened by a boy stirring up a bee-hive with a long pole, could be likened to the natural journeying of the bees, them-

selves, from flower to flower, to gather honey for a winter's store.

The true teacher is no enemy to a truly graded school. He believes in orderly arrangement, a fit curriculum, good methods of instruction, and discipline. But he uses all these as aids to the real work of stirring the mind, awakening true impulses, and developing native activities. He does not object to the leadership of his class by the superior few; for every school-room is led by its leading class, and to teach without such aid would be useless. His real aim is the common personality of every child. He seeks to arouse the love of truth, the thirst for knowledge and to train the working-powers common to all. In doing this, in a vital way, he does not produce a slavish uniformity. One boy, on being awakened to the love of knowledge and fitly trained, becomes a superior linguist, another a lover of science, a third a mathematician. James remains James, and Mary is not changed to Jane or Joe, because all receive the common training that underlies a true individuality in every child of man. In this school the motive-power is not a force from without, but an inspiration from within. The deep earnest and genuine sympathy of the teacher kindles, first, the more generous and susceptible, and creates an irresistible public opinion on the side of thorough study and good conduct. Right examples and real methods of study are as contagious, in their own way, as mechanism in its shallow sphere. So this teacher, because he is a deeper and broader man, appealing to the nobler side of youth, carries the keys that unlock the eager mind, the over-full heart, and the abounding latent energy of the child. His work cannot be tested on

examination day, or shown off in a display of school-room fireworks for the amazement of a wondering crowd of doting mamas and bewildered papas. But the most stupid urchin goes out from him somewhat touched with the glory and significance of life; and to many a pupil his ministry in the school-room has been an apostleship of the Almighty God, proclaiming anew the everlasting gospel of truth and beauty and love.

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